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AN
ADDRESS
ON THE
ANNEXATION OF TEXAS,
AND THE ASPECT OF
SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES,
IN CONNECTION THEREWITH :

DELIVERED IN BOSTON NOVEMBER 14 AND 18, 1845.

By STEPHEN C. PHILLIPS.

BOSTON :
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,
118 WASHINGTON STREET.

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ADDRESS.

A VAST question, vitally affecting the national character, and involving the most serious political consequences, and which must be determined in conformity with, or in disregard of, the highest obligations of duty, demands our consideration.

Let us *deliberate*. I differ, perhaps, from some who hear me, in thinking that deliberation, as preparatory to action, rather than action without deliberation, is the duty of the present moment. There are those, as we know, who, with their devotion for years to the contemplation of the subject, and the absorption of their feelings in the fervor which it excites, have become so familiar with all its relations and exigencies, and have pledged themselves before the world to so unalterable a purpose, that no event finds them unprepared to meet it. They even keep themselves ahead of the rapid progress of events, and, living in the future, are all the while devising measures which can become practicable only when others shall have actually reached the position which they in imagination already occupy, and when, perhaps, from the effect of increased intelligence and reflection, the prevalence of more enlightened views of interest and duty, all such measures may be unnecessary. Whatever commendation, therefore, they deserve for forecast, intense ardor, and resolute determination, they must be content to await the slower action of other minds, and to abide the result, so distant from their goal, which is now attainable. They must consider, what we all should consider, that it is no less true than lamentable, that a large portion of our fellow-citizens are not even yet prepared to express their opinions upon the present state of this momentous question ; that information is still to be diffused, that facts are yet to be learned, and

that the spirit which the occasion requires is to be evoked from the apathy and indifference which pervade the community.

I say again, *Let us deliberate*. I know full well, — I feel it deeply, — that Massachusetts must be prepared for early action, or fail to redeem the pledge she has given to the country. Many eyes are turned on Massachusetts. By common consent she occupies the front rank in the struggle of the Free States against the extension of slavery, and by her conduct she must prove whether she will continue true to herself and an example to them. For the reason, therefore, that we occupy a conspicuous position, and are made responsible for important consequences, and because the manner in which we perform our duty ought not to be disregarded, I earnestly desire that the brief opportunity which is afforded by every meeting like the present may be used for deliberation, and that our deliberation may manifest such a spirit as will render our action what it should be, dignified, discreet, and effectual.

In considering the subject before us, I do not propose at this time to enter into all its details, or to dwell upon any of the facts relating to it, except those which are of recent occurrence. The plot for the annexation of Texas, in its earlier stages, was marked by a succession of incidents, which but slowly developed the foul purpose in which it originated, and did not lead many to suspect the means by which it was to be accomplished. At the Faneuil Hall Convention in January, I attempted to recount them, and, tedious as was the task, I did not find it difficult to show, that, from the outbreak of the insurrection in the department of Texas consequent upon the abolition of slavery in Mexico, every step that was taken to promote a revolution, and to establish temporarily a new government, was taken under the advice, and chiefly through the agency, of slave-holders belonging to the United States, who were intent upon defeating the anti-slavery policy of the Mexican republic, and sought at the same time, through the accession of a vast slave-holding territory, to extend and perpetuate the power of the Slave States in this Union. This design, as recently avowed by Mr. Calhoun, was scarcely concealed by his friends in their first movements to obtain the recognition of Texan independence, and immediate annexation therewith ; and although at that time partially frustrated, and afterwards obstructed from the want of executive coöperation during the administration of Mr. Van Buren, the evidence is conclusive that it was tenaciously ad-

hered to by leading slave-holding politicians of both parties, and that it thus became an available expedient to Mr. Tyler, when, in his desperate circumstances, he was ready to seize upon any project that might make him the centre of a new alliance. Under his auspices, — through the efforts of Mr. Upshur and Mr. Calhoun, — by a course of diplomacy the most extraordinary and unwarrantable upon our records, a treaty was concluded with Texas, and submitted to the Senate for ratification. Its ratification was anxiously awaited and pertinaciously urged, *as the only constitutional mode of final action upon the subject in the view of the friends of annexation* ; and when the ratification was refused, it was at first the undivided impression upon the public mind throughout the country, that the “vexed question” was finally and effectually disposed of. Still, unprecedented, unauthorized, and wholly unjustifiable as had been the entire series of proceedings connected with annexation, both in Texas and the United States, before the negotiation of the treaty, and exceptionable as was the treaty in the view of many who regarded it as providing in a constitutional form for an unconstitutional object, and who saw that it had been negotiated under the most corrupting and compulsory influences, it was reserved for the madness of desperation, in the last resort, to attempt and succeed in an artifice, which, had it been proposed in advance, would not probably have found a sane advocate throughout the Slave States, or even in Texas itself. The object of this artifice was to *revive the treaty* in the shape of a *joint resolution*, introduced into the *House of Representatives* upon the special recommendation of the *President* !

Some of you must now remember, that, when we separated from each other at the Faneuil Hall Convention, there were those who undertook to relieve our apprehensions of the certainty of annexation by assuring us that “it could never be brought to pass.” At that time the joint resolution had just been carried through the House of Representatives by a hard-wrung vote. Intrigue and corruption, the party cabal, the edict from the Hermitage, executive patronage, as exercised alike by the President about to retire and the President about to succeed him, had wrought their usual effect upon the doe-faced, venal Democracy of the Free States, while a few slave-holding Whigs, with their accustomed treachery in every such exigency, were found ready, at the last moment, not to follow in the rear, but to lead the van of the unholy alliance, and to signalize themselves as the authors of the pro-

ject by which the fatal blow was to be struck at the Constitution, and the Union to be endangered. Still the Senate had not acted, and it seemed to be the abandonment of the last hope of the republic to doubt the wisdom or distrust the firmness of the great majority of that conservative body. They had resisted the first attempt of the Executive, when, in a mistaken reliance upon their coöperation, he had submitted the treaty for ratification ; and the pledge of their character was given to the country, that now, when the treaty-making power had been set at naught, in a case involving an insult to their dignity and an invasion of their rights and of the reserved rights of the States which they represented, they would not shrink from their highest duty. Yes, when the Convention met in January, the Senate had not acted ; and I well recollect that a respected friend, who did not appear in his proper place upon that occasion, stated, as a reason for his absence, that he deemed all popular action uncalled for and inexpedient, since the Senate might be trusted to sustain itself. I well recollect, too, to what persuasion most of us yielded, not to give to our proceedings the character which they might properly have assumed, if the Senate was not to be relied on, and if no hope remained but in a special and emphatic exercise of the sovereignty of the people.

The Convention adjourned ; and it soon became manifest that the attempt would be persevered in to undermine the last bulwark of the Constitution, — that the Senate was in danger, — and that the Senate was overthrown ! For every other cause than this, it had again and again maintained the Constitution and saved the country. It had often stood between a domineering Executive and a subservient House of Representatives, and had stayed the arm of usurped power, and asserted alike its executive and legislative independence. It had always guarded the honor of the nation in its relations to foreign governments, and had faithfully adhered to every treaty stipulation, and every obligation of good faith and comity. But it was reserved for the Senate to prove itself unequal to this last encounter with the insidious foe of our republican institutions, and to exhibit the humiliating spectacle, not only of the prostration of its proper dignity, but of the sacrifice, by its own hands, of the rights of the States committed to its charge, upon the unhallowed shrine of the Moloch of slavery ! In the Senate, as in the House, by adroit management, by pretence and subterfuge, by executive promises and party denunciation, and, in the end, by the same detestable conjunction of slave-holding Whigs and

Free-State Democrats, the work of shame and infamy was wellnigh accomplished. It was wellnigh accomplished ! For a moment, a gleam of hope flitted across our anxious brows, as we gazed in amazement at the singular attitude of a Democratic slave-holding Senator, who, in such an emergency, could pause to consult the Constitution ! For a moment, as the fatal decision seemed suspended by a single vote, our thanksgivings went up to Heaven for the temporary deliverance, mingled with our prayers that a sinful nation might yet be spared the retribution which it had brought upon itself. But it could not be so. Heaven, in its justice, had ordered otherwise ; and having "sown the wind," in all our compromises and dalliances with slavery, from the formation of the Constitution downward, what should we expect but the righteous doom to "reap the whirlwind" ?

The period of suspense in regard to the action of the Senate was but of brief duration. A Senator from Alabama had his constitutional scruples, which he declared could not be removed, if he were required to vote upon the joint resolution as it had passed the House ; he could consent to annexation only by the exercise of the treaty-making power. As the treaty-making power could not be exercised but with the concurrence of two thirds of the Senators, and as a treaty had been rejected, it was foreseen by President Tyler, and the friends of annexation in the House, that to acquiesce in the only mode of proceeding which Senator Bagby deemed constitutional was in effect to abandon the project ; that, in other words, to save the Constitution was to lose Texas ! The measure could not be carried in the Senate without his vote ; and his conscience had forced him to declare that he could not vote for it. What a phenomenon, — the Democratic party held at bay by the mutinous conscience of one of its members ! What an anomaly, — a Democratic slaveholder hesitating to violate the Constitution for the purpose of extending slavery ! What a dilemma, — the "lone star" of President Tyler's glory threatened with an eclipse, — the diplomacy of Upshur and Calhoun on the point of proving a total failure, — the heroes of San Jacinto and the statesmen of Austin in danger of being pent up once more within the narrow horizon of Texan valor and ambition, — slave-traders and slave-breeders and the holders of land scrip on the brink of ruin through their speculations, — and President Polk about to be relieved from his indebtedness to his predecessor for all the prospective success of his administration ! To dispose of a case of conscience under such extraordinary

circumstances, and to avoid the difficulties it involved, — to achieve a result which seemed thus impracticable, was of course a task which required a resort to unusual expedients ; and it becomes us to ponder well the unprecedented method of legislation — if legislation it can be called — by which the work was done.

So long as the Senator from Alabama obeyed his conscience, the joint resolution, as it came from the House, could not be carried in the Senate, nor could it be agreed to with any amendment which involved a substitute for the treaty-making power. The House, swayed by considerations of expediency, sought to give validity to the action of a bare majority of the two branches of Congress ; the Senate stood upon its constitutional rights, as these were admitted and maintained by the Senator from Alabama. But the firmness of the Senator did not prove equal to the exigencies of his position. He was disposed to support the Constitution, but he could not desert his party. He still boasted of his loyalty to the new President, to whom it was found he was even ready to intrust the custody of his conscience. He was willing to take the risk of authorizing a violation of the Constitution by the act of the President, though by his own act he could not be prevailed upon to undertake it. To meet the case, therefore, in all its peculiarities, the assent of the Senator was obtained to an amendment of the joint resolution, by which the President was authorized to *make his election* between the method of legislative negotiation proposed by the House and the exercise of the treaty-making power as claimed by the Senate ! To show its object, had the modified resolution contained a preamble, it might have declared, that, *whereas* the annexation of Texas must be effected without delay, and by any practicable means ; and *whereas*, by the refusal of the Senate to ratify the treaty, the constitutional power of the government has been exhausted ; and *whereas*, upon the recommendation of the President, the House of Representatives has assumed the power beyond the Constitution required by the contingency, and by the passage of a joint resolution, in its terms equivalent to a treaty, has made it necessary only for a bare majority of the Senate to concur in enabling the President to carry it into effect ; and *whereas* the concurrence of the Senate is suspended upon the vote of a single Senator, who is restrained by conscientious scruples from giving his aid to this attempt to divest the Senate of its constitutional functions ; and *whereas* the Senator aforesaid, notwithstanding his scruples as aforesaid, in proof of his

party allegiance, and to avoid as far as he may all political and moral responsibility, has been prevailed upon to consent that the President may decide to violate or maintain the Constitution as circumstances shall require ; *therefore* RESOLVED, that the President be authorized to effect the annexation of Texas in either of the modes, constitutional or unconstitutional, which have been proposed respectively, though not in concurrence, by the Senate and House of Representatives.

Thus illustrated, the joint resolution, as it finally passed, is exhibited in its true character ; in no proper sense, scarcely even in its form, an act of legislation, and in substance nothing more nor less than a justification in advance, nay, a solicitation, of executive usurpation. I say, then, let this measure be construed as a precedent, — let the power for once thus conferred upon the President be continued to him, — let the Senate be thus circumvented in the exercise alike of its executive and legislative functions, — I say it boldly, that our republican government is resolved into a monarchy, that its most important object is defeated, that its spirit is extinct, its life is gone.

Senator Bagby consented to the joint resolution ; but, let it be remembered, he did so with a declaration of his confidence that the President would discard the proposal of the House, and would manifest his respect for the rights of the Senate. He did so, it was presumed, with the expectation that the execution of the resolution would be reserved for Mr. Polk, and would not be undertaken by Mr. Tyler. When, but a few days afterwards, it was understood, that, without a moment's delay, a special messenger had been despatched to our Chargé, to instruct him to negotiate with the Texan government upon the basis of the proposition of the House, who does not recollect the outcry, that Mr. Tyler had forestalled Mr. Polk, and had violated the good faith upon which Senator Bagby had relied ? Unfortunate Senator ! Review your devious course, and contemplate its result ! If you were honest, confess your error, and, while you blush for the weakness through which you were betrayed, dare now to look your betrayer in the face, and brand him as such before the country, even though his name should be JAMES K. POLK ! Yes ! yes ! it was not Mr. Tyler who took undue advantage of the Senator's confidence in Mr. Polk, but, as is now fully disclosed in the correspondence of Mr. Donelson, it was Mr. Polk himself, backing Mr. Tyler, who, in defiance of the known opposition of the Senate to such a course of proceeding, and

aware that the vote of Mr. Bagby was not intended to authorize it, instructed Mr. Donelson to say to the Texan Secretary of State, that in this way only, and "now or never," could annexation be effected, — that with extreme difficulty, and under extraordinary circumstances, the President had obtained from Congress the questionable authority to negotiate upon these terms, and that, if there should be a conclusion on the part of Texas to vary the terms or to prefer a treaty, or if in any way the opportunity should be afforded to the Senate or the people of the United States to act again upon the subject, — it was Mr. Polk, faithless to his friend, and false to his country, who, through Mr. Donelson, declared to Texas that an assent to the annexation could never be renewed.

By such perfidy, then, as is exhibited without a gloss in the instructions to Mr. Donelson, by the importunity which he is directed to use, by the unauthorized pledge which he is told to give, that all claims of Texas not stipulated in the joint resolution shall be afterwards satisfied, by the promise of military assistance to the extent of waging a war with Mexico, — by such means, have we lived to see the people of Texas induced to consent to become politically united with the people of the United States. For the completion of such a project, by means alike extraordinary and unwarranted throughout, we have seen the army and navy of the United States withdrawn from almost every station within the limits of our own country, or within the range of our commerce, and concentrated upon the frontier and coasts, or in the immediate vicinity, of Texas. Strange sight as it has been, we have seen the militia of some of the States ordered into foreign service upon the requisition of our army officers, who have thus shown themselves prone to imitate their superiors in the exercise of power not conferred by the Constitution or laws. We have seen, too, last of all, that, under the guise of this negotiation with Texas, the boundaries of Texas have been settled anew, and that a large portion of Mexico, notoriously admitted to be and occupied as her territory, is most surreptitiously and wrongfully included in the annexation.

Such, since we met in Faneuil Hall, have been some of the more important proceedings preparatory to the annexation of Texas, and the final act seems only to await the sitting of Congress. How do we regard, and how shall we meet it? In reference to immediate action, this is the principal question which we should now consider.

Texas has acceded to the terms proposed by Mr. Donelson, and she has been assured by him, in conformity with his instructions, that the faith of the government is pledged to the fulfilment of the contract on our part, and that her admission to the Union, upon presenting her constitution, will be "a matter of course." On her part, all the proceedings of her government were submitted for ratification to a convention of delegates of the people; and even the doings of the convention are yet to undergo the popular revision. But on our side, we are told, the people have no duty to perform, and no right to exercise; the election of Mr. Polk to the presidency was our vote upon the Texas question, and the action of the government has been reduced to a simple and single act of anomalous legislation. The whole question was settled, the door was shut, the voice of the people was stifled, the power of the people was crushed, when the President was clothed with the power conferred by the joint resolution, if that is to be construed as not affording to the people any opportunity, any right, through their representatives, to express their dissent from it. Yes, I repeat it, — the joint resolution, with its extraordinary provisions, and construed as it has been, made the President in this case a monarch; and he has shown the spirit and wielded the power of a monarch, transcending at will its nominal limitations, and exhausting all the attributes of despotic sovereignty, in preparing for the exigencies of peace or war, as circumstances might seem to require.

But will the people submit to such usurpation? Are they satisfied with a change of government and a change of country? Is it enough that despotism wears the mask of democracy, and is the certain and unlimited gain of slavery a compensation for the equally certain and unlimited loss of liberty? If the Slave-holding States, in the spirit of their peculiar institutions, shall acquiesce and triumph in such an issue, are the Free States ready to submit and abide by it? Are their hearts open, are their arms outstretched, are they eager to give the pledge in advance to cherish and defend Texas as a sister State, — and are their love of union and their love of country such, that principle and duty, consistency and honor, all go for nothing, when the opportunity is afforded, by the worst of means, of making their country more magnificent, and their patriotism more expansive?

These, fellow-citizens, are proper questions for our consideration; and Massachusetts, it should be presumed, is prepared to answer them. Upon this whole subject her

principles and her policy have been settled in advance. From its inception, she has denounced and declared her determination to resist the project for the annexation of Texas, as, in any form of legislative or executive action, beyond the competency of the government, and opposed alike to the wishes, the interests, and the rights of the people. From her watchtower upon the ramparts of the Constitution, she discovered the first movements of this secret conspiracy against liberty and humanity, and gave the alarm to the country. Before it was avowed, she recognized its design, and, in unappeasable hostility to this design, she uttered her protest against it. Once and again, without distinction of party, by the joint action of a Whig House of Representatives and a Democratic Senate, with the approbation successively of a Whig and a Democratic governor, she has formally placed this protest upon the records of every department of her government, and has caused it to be deposited in the archives at Washington. Coupled with this protest is the solemn pledge that she will not submit to a violation of the Constitution by the exercise of such undelegated power as must be assumed to give effect to the annexation of Texas, and that she will regard the annexation, whatever may be its form, and under any circumstances, as not binding upon her.

Such, before the country, and before the world, such as it will appear upon the page of history, was the position of Massachusetts, which she saw fit to assume with a full and clear view of all the principles and consequences involved in it. It was no question of expediency which she undertook to decide ; but, in all its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, a question of principle. She did not ask herself what she could do to maintain the principle which she asserted ; — to assert the principle involved the duty of maintaining it, and she trusted in her ability to perform her duty. Let none now suppose that it was then too soon to determine her course ; it was the very moment for calm, serious, and unprejudiced deliberation. It was the only moment when the question could be considered on its merits alone ; and if vigilance is the security of liberty, and promptness of action the proof of vigilance, to have seen the danger that was then visible, and to have done nothing to avert it, would have been — unworthy of Massachusetts.

Shall we retreat from our first position ? Has a change of circumstances effected a change of principles, or a change of our purpose to adhere to them ? Has it become a ques-

tion of expediency whether we shall act upon principle? In our present view of consequences, do we apprehend any worse loss than the loss of character, and have we become indifferent to that? These questions, seek to disguise and avoid them as we may, are of such practical importance and urgency, that we cannot escape from the duty of answering them to our consciences, to the country, to the world, and to Heaven. Nay, our very silence must answer them, for it will be the confession of our shame.

No citizen of Massachusetts as yet pleads guilty of ignorance or of a change of opinion upon the subject. Some, indeed, are anxious to change the form of the question, to go off upon collateral issues, to shun the point where conscience meets them. But not even in the recent Democratic convention, with all the ingenuity which was exercised to compound a series of resolutions upon the Texas question in such proportions of sophistry, subterfuge, and evasion, that they might not injure the party at home, and yet recommend its office-seekers to favor at Washington, could the attempt succeed to obtain a retraction from the Democrats of their agency in the legislative proceedings. The proposal was made with consummate artfulness, and, of course, in a *Van Burenized* form, — but the men, whose recorded votes, so tormentingly reproduced in the Whig newspapers, stared them in the face, could not quite come up, in open day, and in plain language, to the requirement of the administration. Indirectly, in the dark, allow them to proceed by a circuitous course from a new starting-point, — devise for them some disguise of Jeffersonian policy, patriotic love of union, enmity to Great Britain, vindication of the national honor, — put it to them as a settled question, — instigate them to action by the hate-stirring outcry, that they were still opposing the old Federalists, — you might find many of them ready enough by their conduct to forswear their principles, and, Democrats as they call themselves, to rally and vote for Texas and slavery, and against liberty and the Constitution, so long, at least, as their paltry services as partisans should be solicited and paid for. But still, as I have said, it was too much to expect of the leaders and their tools, that in express terms they should abjure their participation in the legislative proceedings of Massachusetts against the annexation of Texas. It was too much to expect, *even of them*, that they should be ready to act unblushingly and barefacedly in the manner and for the object proposed. Apart, too, from a sense of personal shame, they calculated the

effect of such open and sudden action upon the honest portion of their party. It would cost them, they said, the loss of many thousand votes, and would sink the cause of Democracy in irretrievable ruin and lasting disgrace. Let this fact, then, that the retracting resolutions miscarried in the Democratic convention, be accredited as the evidence that the legislature truly interpreted the public sentiment, and that the public sentiment remains unchanged. If Polk Democrats, while the distribution of offices in Massachusetts is not completed, shrink from a recantation, who else is there among the citizens of Massachusetts that will stoop to do the deed in their stead?

Our principles, then, are unchanged. What was declared and recorded in 1838, and at the three last sessions of the legislature, is still the opinion and purpose of Massachusetts. We cannot submit to a violation of the Constitution. We will not consent to the extension of slavery. The Union as it is, except that there is not freedom enough in it, suffices for our patriotism; and we can never look beyond its limits with any other sentiment than that *where there dwells not liberty, there shall never be our country.*

It is evident, fellow-citizens, that no inconsiderable work must be done to sustain the position of Massachusetts. But *what can we do?* This is the question, which many are heard to ask with a marked emphasis, as if they supposed that none could undertake to answer it. Let me prepare to answer it by admonishing those who ask it, that, if as yet we can do nothing *for* our cause, we can at least abstain from doing any thing *against* it. We can avoid doing any thing that will tend to discourage each other's hearts and weaken each other's hands. We can avoid the manifestation of any lukewarmness or indifference, any want of fidelity, any covert retraction of the Massachusetts pledge. We can avoid thinking and feeling, or speaking and acting, otherwise than as those who are in earnest, and of whom it may be seen by all around them that their course is determined and that their purpose is unalterable. We can avoid giving to our cause by our own acts the aspect of "a foregone conclusion" and "a forlorn hope." We can abstain, at least, from abandoning it in advance, and from giving to its opponents the impression that we are prepared to abandon it, and that, before the event can warrant us in congratulating them upon their success, we are ready and eager to anticipate the result by giving them assurance of the conciliatory purpose with which we shall await it.

Thus much, at least, we can refrain from doing ; and still we may not be inactive. We cannot be inactive. So far from it, if the true spirit of the cause has taken possession of our hearts, we shall find ourselves able and disposed every day to perform some active service that will promote it. Every effort to diffuse information, still so much needed, — every word of expostulation or encouragement uttered in the ear of an unconcerned or irresolute neighbour, — every abandonment of prejudice and every sacrifice of unworthy feeling which we find to be still required of ourselves, — every manifestation of our sentiments and the exertion of our influence upon proper occasions, is so much which may be done by every individual amongst us. Acting together, too, as individuals merged in masses, in the mighty combinations which have been formed under the impulse of our religious and political sympathies, we have it in our power to give or to refuse, and we are so situated that we must decide to give or to refuse, the vast weight of our combined influence in the church and state to this truly Christian and republican undertaking.

In this connection, I am happy to notice the indications, which many felt that we had too long waited for, of a willingness on the part of the religious denominations to take up this cause as one properly claiming their prayers and labors in its behalf. In the divisions which have recently rent in twain the churches, from whose closely guarded fellowship slaveholders, as such, had not been excluded, — in the discussions of the ecclesiastical conventions, in which the power of truth, overcoming obstacles repeatedly interposed, has at length caused its voice to be heard, — in the protest and other formal declarations of the clergy, which show so many of them prepared to assume their share of responsibility, there is proof of progress and cause of encouragement enough, of themselves, to assure our faith and kindle our hope, and to stimulate us all to renewed and increased activity.

But it is through our political action, that the work which we now have to do — the duty of this day and hour — must necessarily be performed. It is of course to be expected, that, at the commencement of the next session of Congress, upon the recommendation of the President, bills will be introduced for the annexation of Texas to the country, and for her admission as a State into the Union. I have said already that without doubt this will be proposed and attempted as a matter of course, and that the good faith of the government, as

pledged in the joint resolution, will be alleged to require the prompt and uncomplaining adoption of both these measures. What we have to do, therefore, is here and everywhere to resist such a construction of the joint resolution, and such an inference from it. We, indeed, go further, and deny the validity of the joint resolution, and reject it altogether as unconstitutional and void. But, odious as it is, the joint resolution does not preclude deliberation and the free action of Congress upon the measures resulting from it, but distinctly refers to them as involving the final action in the case, and leaves this action to be as free and uncontrolled as in any other case of legislation whatever.

A vast responsibility, then, remains with the representatives of the people ; and the people have their usual right — the right which is the foundation of all others in a democratic government — to form and express their opinions for the instruction of their representatives. We have a right, especially, to claim of our representatives that the rights of the States and the people, palpably violated by the joint resolution, shall be respected and recognized anew ; and, under the circumstances, it clearly becomes us to anticipate the meeting of Congress by the preparation of a solemn PROTEST, which shall authoritatively forbid the violation of the Constitution, and in the name of a free people shall remonstrate against all further proceedings for the extension of slavery.

Surely in Massachusetts, if nowhere else, the preparation and presentation of such a protest is a step which must be taken to sustain the dignity of her past course, and to place her in a suitable attitude for future action. It will be, at least, the proper completion of the record of her proceedings on the subject ; and she is fortunately in a situation to strike this last blow for the Constitution and Liberty by the hands of champions equal to the occasion and worthy of herself. As if it were to meet this crisis, the “Defender of the Constitution” is again the representative of Massachusetts in the Senate ; and upon the floor of the House of Representatives — if Heaven shall spare his life and vigor — there will once more stand forth in her behalf the “brave old man” who has borne the brunt of every battle against Texas and slavery, and is ready to spend his last breath in uttering his last warning against the surrender or the overthrow of the rights of freemen. Let the protest of Massachusetts, declaring her principles and avowing her determination to maintain them, — attested by the signatures of all her citizens who, for such a purpose, are not afraid to proclaim themselves

such, — be placed in the hands of DANIEL WEBSTER and JOHN QUINCY ADAMS ; and let them, as the spirit of the cause shall move them, discharge their duty in presenting it. In such a cause, at such a time, they cannot speak in vain. They may not change the course of Congress ; the slaveholder and the Northern Democrat may not heed them for the moment ; but they will not speak in vain to the understandings and the consciences of a great mass of enlightened and honest citizens throughout the country ; they will not speak in vain to or for their own constituents. No ; they will utter the voice of Massachusetts in tones that shall be echoed and reëchoed in the ears of every freeman and every slaveholder from Maine to Texas ; and as they listen to it, freeman and slaveholder alike will be reminded of what Massachusetts was in the times of the Revolution, and neither of them will conclude that she can *now* speak in vain.

I say, then, fellow-citizens, that it will be something for present action to take the necessary steps for preparing and presenting the protest of Massachusetts, and that it is necessary thus to complete our preliminary proceedings in opposition to the annexation of Texas. I see, however, as we all do, that there is but little to encourage the hope that the annexation can be defeated ; and I am prepared, as I trust we all are, in a spirit of anxious patriotism, to contemplate the fearful issue which that event must place before us.

Texas annexed, — *what has become of the Constitution ? what shall be the cement of the Union ? in what country, and under what government, shall we live ?* This is a question so broad, so deep, so vital, that we cannot consider it too seriously ; and, answer it as we will, any answer will require action. Answer it as we will, our present position is such that we must retreat or advance from it ; we must abandon our principles, or carry them into effect.

Texas annexed, — *what has become of the Constitution ?* Massachusetts answers of course, — she has given her answer in advance, — the Constitution has been violated and overthrown. The Constitution, as she has always understood it, as is plain to all who can read it, was a compact between certain States, providing for the establishment of a general government for certain purposes which are expressly prescribed, and stipulating that all rights not granted to the general government are reserved to the States and the people respectively. By ratifying the Constitution the original States became united in a political partnership, and as voluntary partners they have shared all the privileges and

burdens, all the responsibilities and duties, of such a connection. The Constitution contains no provision for extending the partnership, except so far as to authorize the formation of new States within the limits of the original States or of the territory belonging to them collectively ; and it clearly was not contemplated or desired that the question of enlarging the common country should be considered or decided in any other manner than as a question to be submitted, like that upon the adoption of the Constitution, to the people of all the States. The attempt, therefore, on the part of the general government, in any of its branches, to enlarge the country, is regarded by Massachusetts as an invasion of the reserved rights of the States and the people, and thus a violation of the Constitution. Massachusetts occupies this ground, and she maintains it in disregard of the treaties for the acquisition of Louisiana and Florida. She maintained it with Mr. Jefferson in opposing the Louisiana treaty ; and, waiving the consideration of the admitted peculiarities in both cases, she insists that they derived their validity from a subsequent and general acquiescence in them. Granting, however, all that can be claimed from the construction of these treaties as precedents, Massachusetts sees, that, if, by any act of the government under the Constitution, a foreign nation may be annexed to the country, it can only be through the exercise of the treaty-making power ; and, stopping here, she unites with all who hesitate to adopt her broader conclusion, in denouncing the attempt to make Texas one of the United States, — not by a treaty, with the advice and consent of two thirds of the Senate, but, after the rejection of a treaty, by a semi-legislative and semi-executive negotiation, not fairly authorized by the regular vote of a bare majority of the two Houses, — as a proceeding which, in its object, and by virtue of the means included in it, annuls the Constitution. If a right reserved by the States and people is, without their consent, to be assumed by the general government, — or if the treaty-making power, so carefully guarded in consideration of the rights of the States, is to be trampled upon and set at naught in a question directly involving the vital rights of the States, — what remains in the Constitution which the States can or ought to be content with ? and what can make it valid for any other good purpose in a time of need, if, in a case like this, it cannot be maintained ? I say, then, deliberately, that, when Texas shall have been annexed in the mode which is proposed, the Constitution, for many purposes at least, will have been virtually abrogated ;

that, with such a precedent, there will be practically no longer any reserved rights of the States or people ; and that the general government, acting only through the President and a bare majority of the two Houses of Congress, — acting, in effect, through the President alone, — will be absolute and supreme.

Texas annexed, and the Constitution thus violated, — *what shall be the cement of the Union?* The Union, — well may we stand aghast in dread of its dissolution ! When we recollect the purpose of the framers of the Constitution, — when we call to mind the valedictory counsels of Washington, — when we contemplate the progress, and, in many of its aspects, the present prosperity, of the country, — when we see in its physical features, in its varied and combined resources, what God fitted the country to become, — when we remember how much our fathers endured and sacrificed to serve and save and unite the country, — and when we reflect what we ourselves, with all the advantages of our times, may be enabled to do for it, the thought is appalling, that at this moment the sword is perhaps suspended by a single hair, which, at one stroke, may dissever the Union ! Yet so it may be, if the fatal blow now aimed at the Constitution shall not be arrested ; — nay, so it must be, if the spirit of mutual confidence and of attachment to a common object, which is the life of union, shall be extinguished. If, by the annexation of Texas, the Free States are to be made to feel that their rights have been disregarded, and that the sole object of annexation is to make the general government the instrument of the Slaveholding States for the perpetuation of slavery, by what tie of feeling or interest, for what valuable common object, for what truly national purpose, can it be supposed that the Union is to be preserved ? How can a slave-holding policy be sustained or tolerated by Free States ? and how long can Free States consent to be deprived of the power of legislating for their own welfare ? To bring the case home to Massachusetts, — what can she see in union with Texas for the sake of slavery, which can reconcile her to the connection ? Massachusetts and Texas, — forced together as they will be, — all the peculiarities of their character and condition tending only to mutual repulsion, — how can they become, in any proper view of the relation, for any purpose of cordial or useful union, sister States ? Much, then, as union is to be valued while it exists, how plain is it, that, unless it can be maintained in perfect good faith, upon a practical basis of equal rights and common interests, it must cease to exist !

At the time of the formation of the Constitution, Mr. Madison entertained and avowed the apprehension that the chief danger to the Union would arise, not, as some supposed, from the disparity in political power between the large and small States, but from the essential difference in character and in interests between the Free and Slave-holding States. With all the manifestations of our national growth and greatness, the experience of the country has shown that the union of the States has been always imperfect; that there has been a bitter ingredient in the cup, — a canker at the root of our prosperity; and, in confirmation of the prophetic apprehension of Mr. Madison, it is easy to see, that, from first to last, the element in our institutions so adverse to union has been *slavery*. In peace or war, upon almost every question which has produced a serious division of opinion and feeling, this result may be traced to a renewed disagreement between the Free and Slave-holding States. Seldom with respect to our foreign affairs, and still more seldom in regard to the domestic policy of the government, have they acted together with any cordiality. In the discussion of questions affecting their relative interests, the point with the North has necessarily been, what will make free labor more productive, and with the South, what will make slave labor more secure; and, by adhering to these points, the two sections of the country have only proved, over and over again, that they cannot occupy common ground, that the coexistence of freedom and slavery does not produce a coalition of interest, or sentiment, or feeling, but that in all these respects they must gradually become more and more alienated from each other, until their differences shall be merged in a desperate struggle for power. Of such a struggle the annexation of Texas is the anticipated result; a result, of course, which must give the victory to the South, and subject the North to all the consequences of an inglorious and injurious defeat. In these new relations of victors and vanquished, with the Constitution trampled down between them, how can the Free and Slave-holding States be expected to approach each other in a spirit of union? What must be the prospect before them, if they shall attempt to remain together, but that of increasing animosity, constant discord, and of a certain and not far distant rupture? How can union be practicable, or even desirable, under such unpropitious circumstances?

Still, as long as the Union, such as it may be, can last, *what, with Texas annexed, will be the country in which we shall live, and, with the Constitution sacrificed to slavery, under*

what government shall we find ourselves ? Imagine the map of the United States as it will then appear to all who inspect it, — to the schoolboy studying his atlas, or the traveller tracing out his route. Let the Slave States be exhibited in the color which represents their peculiar population, and what a black spot will overspread the larger portion of the broad surface ! Trace upon it as you may the bold outlines of natural grandeur, how will they be obscured by the sable drapery which covers or overshadows them all ! Descry along its edges the light-colored space included within the contracted boundaries of the old Free States, — Massachusetts scarcely discernible as a point upon the bay within the capes, — the whole of New England dwindled into comparative insignificance, — the Middle States far distant from the centre, and just skirting a portion of the circumference, — see also the new Free States lying along the line which marks the fatal compromise of 1820, — and learn, as you may thus read the lesson literally “in black and white,” the sad effect of the increase of the country in the disproportionate extension of free and slave-holding territory. Yes, see the country, stretching, as it does already in its breadth, from ocean to ocean, with scarcely any fixed boundary where there is land beyond it, — the Indian, French, Spanish, Mexican, and British titles successively extinguished in its insatiable lust of territory, and yet in the magnificence of its growth exhibiting to the view of the world no other emblem of its condition and destiny than the gloomy and lengthening pall with which the map is shrouded ! Alas, that it must be so ! The new world, discovered by Columbus, in its virgin freshness, despoiled of its charms by the most loathsome corruption, — the Garden of the West, with its fertility proving a curse, as the allurements and support of slave labor, — and the “Land of the Free,” the country of Washington, known and described as the principal slave-holding and slave-breeding region of the earth !

In such a country, if it can be kept together under slave-holding control, *what of necessity must be the nature and effect of its government ?* Call it by what name you will, — when, under the circumstances, there can be no alternative between anarchy and despotism, — when it has become the main object of the government to establish the power of oppressors over the oppressed, — when every influence of freedom, direct or remote, can only prove adverse to the design of the government, and must be guarded against accordingly, — what vestige can remain of the republic of which we have fancied

ourselves citizens, what virtue will there be in the forms to which we have been accustomed, and what other choice can the people of the Free States have, but to identify themselves with slavery, or to extricate themselves from it ?

I have indulged in gloomy and disheartening apprehensions ; and I have reached a conclusion from which I would instantly recede, were it not that my irrepressible convictions compel me to adhere to it, and a strong sense of duty admonishes me to avow it. I can see no honor, no peace, no safety for the Free States in a continued union with the Slaveholding States, upon the conditions involved in the annexation of Texas, namely,—the overthrow of the Constitution, the extension and perpetuation of slavery, and the transformation of the federal government in all its operations and influences into a scarcely disguised instrument of the slave power. That these conditions will be realized others may not permit themselves to believe ; and, blinded by their wishes and their hopes, they may remain in ignorance of the danger, which can never be warded off or prepared for, unless it is foreseen. But for myself, unwilling and unable to avoid the responsibilities of this occasion, I choose to derive what instruction I may from past and passing events, and to extend my view to the inevitable future ; and I can learn nothing which inspires the slightest confidence, I can see nowhere any ground of hope, that, *with the annexation of Texas, in the mode and for the object proposed*, there can be an escape from the consequences which I have portrayed. That you may realize, however, that despair should be only conditional, let me add that all these consequences may be prevented, that the danger which is so imminent may be averted, that the extension of slavery may be arrested, that the Constitution may be kept inviolate, that the Union may be preserved, that the country can yet be saved, if the people of the Free States shall not prove themselves too unconcerned or too irresolute, too worldly-minded or too abstractly religious, too indifferent to political duty or too much of partisans,—too much of Democrats, or even too much of Whigs,—to be willing to unite in a general effort to make the state of public opinion in the Free States such that at least one hundred and thirteen out of one hundred and thirty-five of their Representatives in Congress shall be inspired with the moral courage, or shall be made to yield to a moral compulsion, to give their votes against the annexation of Texas.

I am aware, that, upon the subject of slavery, in its connection with the Texas question, and in many of its relations,

I differ in opinion from some, whose judgment I am apt to respect, and whose motives I can justly appreciate. *Opposition to slavery in Massachusetts* they pronounce to be *an abstraction*; and they admonish us for the thousandth time that *we have nothing to do with it*.

The slaves, it is said, are not upon our soil, — all are free and equal here. The evils of slavery are in other States, — we are not affected by them, and are not responsible for them. We have all the blessings of freedom, and our free labor is only the more productive, since slaves have neither the intelligence nor skill to supply many of the wants of their masters, whose resort must be to our manufactories and workshops. Even the annexation of Texas, it is intimated, in its practical results, will only extend and strengthen the alliance between the American growers and manufacturers of cotton, and will secure to us, rather than to our European rivals, the monopoly of the markets which the opening of that fertile and spacious country must afford. As to slavery, — they say further, — an evil as it is, its continuance and extension depend not so much upon political or moral causes and influences, as upon the laws of trade and the value of labor; and, for our comfort, we are assured that upon economical principles it must gradually die out; that the grain-growing slave-holders, unable any longer to sustain a competition with free labor, must at once change their operatives; and that, simultaneously, it may be, with the annexation of Texas, we shall behold an exodus of the entire slave population from Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky, at least, and shall continue to see slavery gradually receding elsewhere, until it disappears.

Such, as well as I can comprehend it, is the theory of the anti-abstractionists; and we, who disagree with them, are appealed to, with an air of confidence, to refute it. The task, perhaps, is not so difficult as is supposed.

I undertake to say, then, in the first place, that in Massachusetts, with all her freedom and prosperity, we have been and are compelled to see and feel enough of the evils of slavery, as it exists in other States, in its political, moral, and social influences, to make it of importance to us, in the most practical sense of the term, — to make it our duty, upon republican and Christian principles, — to seek its abolition.

Politically considered, slavery must be traced back to the formation of the Federal Constitution. By recurring to the transactions of that period we shall readily ascertain, that, not then content to withdraw itself from notice as a municipal

institution, sufficiently sheltered within the constitutions of the States, it presented the first claim to the protection of the general government, and, by the guaranties which it exacted, became enabled to draw its life-blood from the vitals of the Union. By the political power secured to it as a basis of representation, by the obligation which is imposed upon every State government, and the citizens of every State, to recognize and enforce its claims, slavery stands forth in the Federal Constitution, and presents itself to the view of every observer of our institutions as a great national concern, and it is seen and felt that every State is thus made, in a measure, responsible for maintaining or submitting to it.

That all was intended by the framers of the Constitution which is now claimed to have been their intention, — that they foresaw all that slavery would become, and meant that it should be so, — that they regarded slavery as, equally with liberty, a constituent and conservative element of a republican government, I do not believe. The evidence is extant in the published journals and debates, that it was their purpose, and that they almost accomplished it (alas ! that Massachusetts should not have concurred with Virginia in persevering to accomplish it), to prohibit, with the adoption of the Constitution, the importation of slaves, — that they regarded slavery as the worst relic of colonial subjection to a monarchy, and had no other idea than that a republican government in its legitimate operation must exterminate it, — and that they were actually looking forward to its gradual abolition. Still, while I am reluctant to receive the Constitution from their hands as a bequest of slavery to their posterity, I am compelled to admit, that, in the light of the subsequent history of the country, I now see clearly, that, in its legislative and judicial interpretation, in the claims which have arisen under it, in the measures in which its authority has been exercised, the Federal Constitution has practically become the palladium of slavery, — that, by virtue of its provisions, though it is not named in one of them, slavery has been accredited as an institution, and has been maintained as such on the basis of a compact binding upon all the States, — and that the “*compromises of the Constitution*,” in the popular sense of that Shibboleth of the anti-abstractionists, comprehend the power to enforce the most odious pretensions of slavery, and especially to make the Free States the instruments of guarding it against the influences of freedom, even to the extent of requiring of their citizens, in opposition to their moral and religious principles, to act as a

police for the arrest of fugitives, and to expose their lives in military service in resisting the retributive consequences of insurrection.

Directly, then, in a manner and degree which should make us constantly realize our responsibility, are we of the Free States required to exert our political influence in support of slavery. While the Federal Constitution lasts, it will be the Free States, as much as the Slave, who will sustain a relation to slavery indispensable to its security and continuance. To the slave panting for his liberty, the attempt is accompanied with but little risk, in most cases, to escape from his master in a Slave State ; he begins to realize his danger, and to encounter an insuperable obstacle, when he feels the power of the federal government, upon reaching the confines of a Free State. If he can but touch the soil which the monarchy of Great Britain has not yet surrendered to the republic of America, that moment he is free ; but in one of our Free States, in Massachusetts, he must still be recognized as a slave, and it is our only duty, under the Federal Constitution, to rebind his chains, and to become instrumental in inflicting all the pangs and hardships which await his return to bondage. It is true that public opinion, as it shall become enlightened, humanized, and Christianized, will render too odious and disgraceful the act of arresting fugitives for any to be willing to undertake it ; but public opinion will then have outgrown the Constitution, and will be in conflict with it ; and therefore, to meet such an exigency as soon as it arises, the Constitution must be so far amended or repudiated. While it lasts, and so long as we shall support it, slavery can be no abstraction to us, and, in view of our liabilities in cases both of escape and insurrection, we must have much to do in sustaining it, — much that should make us ashamed of our position as it is now regarded by the civilized world, and enough to cause us to tremble as we anticipate our share of the righteous judgments of God.

The provision of the Constitution which secures to the owners of slaves a representation in Congress, founded upon what is essentially a property basis, is in its nature so great a wrong, and has proved in its operation so great an injury to the people of the Free States, that it is their unquestionable right and duty to seek to apply the only remedy which the case admits. This the legislature of Massachusetts has attempted, by proposing an amendment of the Constitution, which will make the right of representation uniform and

equal throughout all the States, by securing to the slave the enjoyment of the right as soon as he can possess it for himself, but not conferring upon his master, in consideration of his being a slave-holder, an extension of the electoral privilege far beyond what is or should be allowed to any property-holder in a Free State. That such an amendment should have been proposed by the concurrence of all parties in two successive legislatures is a fact which shows somewhat conclusively that all amongst us have felt this encroachment upon our political rights ; and it is scarcely to be presumed that the reception of the amendment in Congress, and the action upon it in the Slave States, will have abated the conviction, that our duty to ourselves requires of us to be prepared to meet the conflict which slavery in so many directions is forcing upon us.

That slavery is no abstraction, and that the Free States have something to do with it, may be shown, perhaps, still more clearly by passing from the consideration of the specific provisions of the Constitution to a brief review of the policy and operation of the government, as it has been for a long time administered. I have stated my impression that the framers of the Constitution could have scarcely designed or anticipated any thing more than the temporary continuance of slavery in a few of the original States, and its gradual abolition. If so, how remarkably, how wofully, have their anticipations been disappointed, and their purposes defeated ! So far from being limited to a few of the original States, and expiring there, it is the lamentable fact of our national history, that, from the adoption of the Constitution, slavery has made a constant and rapid progress, spreading and increasing in many of the old States, growing with the growth of the States immediately descended from them, and extending itself over nearly the whole of the foreign territory which has been acquired for the purpose of forming new States. It is also a fact with which we are especially concerned, that, with the extension of slavery, its political power has been gradually augmented, until since 1820, when the Missouri compromise was engrafted upon the Constitution, it has become, as it were, stipulated and agreed that the number of Free States shall never exceed the number of Slave States, — that the President or Vice-President for the time being shall always be a slave-holder, — that at least one half of the members of the Cabinet shall be taken from the Slave States, — that in all subordinate appointments the claims of the Slave States shall be allowed in a ratio far exceeding

their undue share of representation, — that opponents of slavery shall not be deemed eligible to any national offices, — and that, in whatever manner the authority of the government can be exerted to uphold slavery, it shall not be withheld.

Now, in view of this established policy of the government, who amongst us can fail to perceive that the Free States, with their vastly greater population, and their greater resources in all respects, in submitting to be placed upon a political equality with the Slave States, and in according to slavery a permanent and controlling influence in the administration of the government, have sacrificed alike their dignity, their principles, their interests, and their rights? And who is there amongst us, capable of estimating the magnitude of such a sacrifice, and unprepared to submit passively to still greater exactions, — who is there, now that slavery claims not only an equality, but, through the annexation of Texas, a preponderance of political power, that does not perceive, that, if there be a question of vital interest, of appalling reality, to him and his fellow-citizens of the Free States, it must be the absorbing question of slavery, especially in the form in which it is now presented, and in reference to the issue which must now be decided?

The political influence of slavery, in the relation it establishes between the Free and Slave States, deserves to be considered in another aspect. The axiom is too trite to be sufficiently regarded, but its truth is all-important, that a republic can have no safe foundation except in the character of its citizens; and that, to make our government what it was designed to be, — to make it indeed a glory and a blessing to the country, — every citizen must be a republican, — in his sentiments, his tastes, his habits, and in all his personal and social relations. It was a natural consequence of the emigration of our forefathers from Great Britain, and an unavoidable incident of colonial subjection to the mother country, that the customs and manners, which had grown up under a monarchy in an aristocratic state of society, should be transplanted here; and it was too much to be accomplished at once, in introducing a change of government, to introduce also a corresponding change in the private condition of the people. In the Free States, however, under the influences peculiar to our institutions, from the effect of universal education, from the necessity of universal industry, and from the practical enjoyment of equal rights, there has been a gradual approximation to the contemplated and intended result; so that it is now seen and felt by all, that, if

society has not yet been organized in entire conformity to the spirit of a popular government, the work of reformation is in progress, and will surely, if but slowly, be accomplished. But, in the Slave States, how opposite has been the tendency of all the causes which are in operation, and how different is the result which may now be witnessed ! What do we see there, but a population composed principally of masters and slaves, growing up together in the mutually degrading habits, and under the mutually corrupting influences, of that unnatural relation ? What do we see there, but masters and slaves, — and how shall we utter the whole truth which a clear view of the relation must reveal to us, without declaring, that in the master, as little as in the slave, are we enabled to recognize the distinctive lineaments, the proper character, the true spirit, of the republican citizen ? Not to denominate every slave-holder (in the words of George Mason) “a petty tyrant,” how can we fail to perceive, that, from his cradle to his grave, all the circumstances by which he is surrounded must tend to make him a different man, and of course a different citizen, from what he would be, had he lived to regard all about him as equally free with himself, and had he been compelled, in the becoming temper of mutual dependence, to perform his share of labor for the common weal ? How can we fail to perceive, that, as a necessary effect of slavery, the master, as well as the slave, must gradually degenerate, — that, of course, all intellectual and moral influences must become less and less available to the improvement of the condition of both of them, — and that the consequent political deterioration of the Slave-holding States will in the end be such, that a republican government can be no longer satisfactory or suitable to them, that they will be unable to sustain its responsibilities, and will thus prove themselves unworthy of its privileges ?

Amidst this conflict of opposing tendencies, how shall it be said or thought that the Free States can remain indifferent, as though they had no interest in the result, when they must see all the while, that, do what they may to improve the condition of the country and to elevate the character of the government, the country as a whole can never become a republic, so long as slavery in one part of it acts as a counterpoise to liberty in the other, and slavery is clothed with an undue share of political power for the purpose of guarding itself against the legitimate effects of liberty ? Upon a little reflection, nothing can be plainer than that it is almost the question of moral life or death to the Free States, whether

they shall remain indifferent, or cease to be so, to the necessary condition of a quiet alliance with the Slave States, namely, virtual submission. Nothing can be plainer, if the present state of things tends only to submission, than that William Pinkney uttered a pregnant truth, when he declared, at the time of ratifying the Constitution, that, if Slavery should survive fifty years, one of its effects would be traced in "the decay of the spirit of liberty in the Free States !"

Politically considered, therefore, in reference to the provisions of the Constitution, the administration of the government, and the popular character, I think I must have shown that slavery presents some claim to the consideration of the people of the Free States, so far as they regard their rights or their interests, and that it imposes on them duties which they cannot neglect with impunity.

I shall take the time to say only a word of its social and moral influences. In these respects slavery has been again and again described by those most familiar with it ; and had I the disposition to draw the gloomiest picture of human degradation, corruption, and infamy which the imagination can sketch, I should only select the facts and borrow the images with which slave-holders have exhibited and illustrated slavery. There are, it is true, those amongst them who have ventured to come forward as its apologists and advocates ; but it is easy to see that they undertake a task which they always fail to accomplish, and that their suppressions and exaggerations betray the truth. All that we can discover, when we search for facts, is the melancholy proof that there is no moral or social evil with which slavery is not identified, — that there is no moral or social tie which it does not unscrupulously and habitually violate, — and that, while it stifles the virtues and panders to the vices of the master, and thus contributes to his degradation, it subjects the slave to every influence which can thwart the moral design of human existence, and leaves him to become, so far only as he is an animal, a man. That, in our unavoidable, and not undesirable, intercourse with our fellow-citizens of the Slave States, we must be exposed to the social and moral influences which the slave-holder and the slave will necessarily exert everywhere about them and beyond them, and that these influences, if not guarded against at first, will spread a contagion in our midst from which we may find it difficult afterwards to escape, are propositions unfortunately proved by so many striking facts, that I shall only

take them for granted, while I add, that, if we have hearts, we must feel, and that we ought to feel, how nearly it concerns us to do what we can, at once and perseveringly, for the abolition of slavery.

In the discussion of this part of my subject, I am obliged, from the want of time, to omit many more topics than I can touch upon. This you will perceive, when I remind you, that, in speaking of the political influences of slavery by which we are affected, I might allude to the toleration of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and the Territories of the United States, in all which all the States have a common interest, and in the former more especially, as the seat of the national government, — to the laws for the security of slavery and the slave-trade, whether passed by Congress for the District of Columbia, or by the legislatures of the several States, so far as they directly infringe the constitutional right of the free colored citizens of the Free States when temporarily resident in them, or conflict with our rights of navigation by removing colored seamen from our vessels in their ports, while they put it out of our power to resort to any legal means of redress, — to the reception of our agents despatched to South Carolina and Louisiana upon a legal errand, in whose persons every citizen of Massachusetts has been deprived of important rights, and subjected to the most contumelious and unwarrantable maltreatment, — to the interference of the general government, as administered under slave-holding control, in regard alike to the Post-office Department, in restraining the distribution of offensive publications through the mail ; the Revenue Department, in employing its officers and vessels in the detention, arrest, and imprisonment of fugitive slaves and free citizens connected with them ; the War Department, in making its garrisons alike slave-quarters and slave-prisons, and converting detachments of the army into body-guards of slavery ; and the Navy Department, in employing our vessels of war under such directions, that the squadron upon the coast of Africa can render no effective service in arresting the foreign slave-trade, while the home squadron seems to have little other design or use than overseeing and protecting the domestic slave-trade. I might also refer to the penal codes of the Slave States, in which sympathy with the slave is made to appear among the worst of crimes, and which have already visited upon citizens of Free States convicted of it the most odious penalties of the whipping-post, the pillory, the branding-iron, and the peni-

tentiary ; and also the scarcely less legitimate code of Lynch laws, and the mobs, riots, and murders, which all have learned to consider as the characteristic resort and main reliance of slavery. And to go only one step further with the bare enumeration of topics, I might ask you if you do not begin to think and feel how much in another way we are yet to have to do with slavery, when you are accosted by the fugitives, — men, women, and children, — who, in such increasing numbers, are presenting themselves amongst us as the meritorious objects of our Christian sympathy and aid ; who already in their settlements, with a population of twenty thousand souls, upon the Canada border, and in their smaller communities in our midst, doing for themselves in every way far better than we should expect of them, still look to us for aid in building their schoolhouses and churches, and in supplying many unavoidable wants, and must not look in vain.

But slavery, it is said, with all its political pretensions and exactions, with all its corrupting social and moral influences, must necessarily be short-lived ; and it is the argument for our endurance of it that it will soon be defunct. Experience, indeed, does not confirm the theory ; the slave population rapidly increases, and never, during the existence of the federal government, has the system exhibited so much vigor, or made such sudden progress, as within a recent period. But, we are told, it will soon die out, at least in the old Slave States, especially in the grain-growing States, where it can no longer sustain a competition with the free labor now operating with so many facilities in all the Free States around them. Upon this point, I admit, that, if Slaveholding States could be assimilated to manufacturing corporations, and might be placed under the management of shrewd Yankee directors, intent only upon pecuniary profits, and if the proposition were merely to discharge and send off one set of operatives when another could be obtained of greater efficiency and on better terms, the abolition of slavery might be easily effected, and would be a matter of course. But there is no parallel between the two cases ; Slaveholding States are any thing rather than associations based upon the application of skill and the employment of industry ; shrewd Yankee directors, or a class of leading citizens of such a character, can never be found in them ; and the operatives cannot be exchanged, while their employers remain with them. There is no parallel between the cases ; and they who propose to get rid of slavery by

an economical theory overlook the fact, that for years and years it has been proved to be and has been felt to be a most unprofitable and onerous system, and fail to see that it has, nevertheless, been kept up, with its increasing burdens, simply because it is an institution, — a political institution, — to which the popular customs and manners and morals have become so adapted and assimilated, that, although all of them must be changed before the institution can be abandoned, the continuance of the institution renders the change impossible.

It is, however, asserted, as if it could not be questioned, that slavery must soon die out in Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky. Look at the facts ! There is Virginia, — the “ancient dominion” of slavery, — in a physical and in a moral view scathed and almost desolated by its influences, — its vast territory, to a great extent, unsettled and uncultivated, and the character of its population (except where it has come in contact with Free States) exhibiting unequivocal symptoms of a progressive degeneracy. When the Federal Constitution was adopted, sixty years ago, the more intelligent statesmen of Virginia avowed their opposition to slavery, as unjustifiable upon principle, and incompatible with her interests. Previously to that period, the State had voluntarily prohibited the importation of slaves, and the people evidently felt and rejoiced to feel that the establishment of the federal government would facilitate their deliverance from the burden under which they groaned. But nearly sixty years have passed away, and Virginia is still nothing more and nothing better, — changed only for the worse, — a Slave State still. The “mother of States,” she has become so by sending her progeny of slaves and their masters into Kentucky and Tennessee, and throughout a large portion of the valley of the Mississippi ; and in this multiplication of her offspring, by such an agency in the extension of slavery, she seems doomed to exert her principal influence upon the character and condition of the country. But why is not Virginia a Free State ? Upon economical principles, and even of her own choice, she should have been so long ago. With natural advantages amply sufficient to stimulate the energies and reward the enterprise and industry of a free population, — with natural advantages enough to place her in population and wealth in advance of every Free State in the Union, — with every thing in her experience to have made her long since weary and sick of slavery, and every thing in the example of her

free neighbours to make her desirous of emulating them, why is she not free? With her once lofty character and proud spirit, how can she stoop to slave-breeding as her principal resource and her disgraceful distinction? The fact is against the economist, but the reason is plain to any inquirer; Virginia can be only what slavery has made her. Obliterate, if you can do so, every vestige of slavery; exterminate alike the master and the slave; leave none upon the soil, except the free laborers who have begun to till the western border; let them be joined by the hardy and intelligent emigrants from the North, who will carry with them liberty and every social and political blessing in its train, — let Virginia in time thus become Massachusetts upon a larger scale, and she will be free, and prosperous, and happy. But without such an extermination of the master and the slave, what can be expected, but that they will remain together, — the master, from his position, becoming more and more dependent upon the slave, and the slave, from his treatment, less and less qualified for freedom, and both contributing to the utmost their joint influence to secure their mutual degradation? In this unfortunate condition, so long as the opening of new slave-markets shall render slave-breeding lucrative, they must remain together; and when this last resource shall fail them, then, and perhaps not till then, will the deep mystery of their fate be solved.

Of Maryland, in regard to her condition and prospects, I need only repeat what I have said of Virginia. In consequence of the greater irruption of a free population, and the smaller number of slaves, it seems a more probable and practicable result that in time she may become a Free State. Still, upon her western and eastern shores the worst and most incurable effects of slavery may be distinctly traced; and there seems to be but little, in the indications of public sentiment on the part of her free citizens, to encourage us to look to them for prompt and energetic action in favor of any adequate system of emancipation. Her position makes her the *dépôt* of the domestic slave-trade for the whole neighbouring region; and while this slave-trade shall continue, so long as the interior country shall furnish a surplus of slaves for coastwise exportation, and the extension of slavery into foreign territory shall keep up the demand for them, Maryland will be, and in the exercise of her political influence will prove that she is, identified with the Slave States.

As for Kentucky, a hasty glance at her past course and

her present condition will still further illustrate the view which I have presented. Nearly fifty years ago, upon the occasion of forming a new State Constitution, the attempt was made, with great discretion, and in the most conciliatory mode, to introduce a system of gradual emancipation. Although slavery at that period was but very limited in its extent, and existed in what is usually described as "its mildest form," it was felt to be an evil in all its influences, and a brief experience had shown it to be incompatible with the true interests of the State. To provide for her future welfare, to secure the development of her great natural resources, to enable Kentucky to start upon a fair race with her sister Ohio, and to redeem and purify the popular character, it was clear to the minds of her most intelligent citizens that she must disconnect herself from slavery ; and as the leading advocate of this policy, with his judgment enlightened by his heart, the young HENRY CLAY presented his first claims to the public admiration and gratitude. But with the combined efforts of the economist and the patriot, not unblessed by the prayers of the Christian, — with a clear view of results, — with all the persuasions and inducements which, upon public and private grounds, could be addressed to the citizens, the proposal was rejected ; and Kentucky, and, most unfortunately, Mr. Clay with her, became committed to an interested and political devotion to slavery. Had her decision at that period been otherwise, how altered might have been the destiny of Kentucky, and how much might since have been accomplished, not only for Kentucky, but for the country at large, by the services of Henry Clay !

I cannot speak from any record of the exact state of the vote, or of the precise grounds upon which Kentucky, when she might have done it, — when it was so much easier for her than it has ever been since, or than it ever may be again, — refused to enter the ranks of the Free States. It is not difficult, however, to conjecture the single but mighty objection, and to trace it to its source : — the master could not consent to free himself from his slave. The chain of slavery is of necessity a double chain ; and when, by the force of prejudice and habit, and of moral degeneracy, it has become firmly welded and compacted, and has been hardened by time, it will be found to bind as closely across the hands of the master as around the neck of the slave. Yes, — such is the effect of slavery, — the master becomes as helpless as the slave is abject ; and it seems to be the retributive condition on which the master is permitted to

retain the power over his slaves, that he shall thereby lose the power over himself. I have but little doubt, that, fifty years ago, the judgment of nearly every slave-holder in Kentucky was convinced that the continuance of slavery was against his interest, and that his conscience admonished him that it was against his duty ; and yet I have as little doubt, that, with a perverted understanding and a seared conscience, many such a one went to the polls, and, with all the overbearing and contemptuous air of a slave-holder, refused by his vote to cease to be one.

Nearly fifty years have passed away, and the decision of Kentucky remains unreversed. She has seen and she has felt the error of her decision. Looking, of course, with a jealous eye on her young rival, she has seen OHIO, with no advantage but that which makes the difference between a Free and a Slave State, far outstripping her in the rapidity and magnificence of her growth ; — her population almost doubling at every decennial census, — a scene of beauty and grandeur overspreading her territory, — enterprise attracting and accumulating capital and investing it in every form of improvement, — education diffusing intelligence, — industry crowned with plenty, — science erecting its observatory, — and the arts reviving in their classic glory. She has seen, too, by the side of OHIO, instinct with her spirit, because free like her, the younger INDIANA, — the first settlers still living on her soil, and yet the number of her free citizens already exceeding that in Kentucky ; and by her side ILLINOIS, — a free population rushing across her prairies, and the wealth of her mines already in the grasp of free labor ; and beyond these, resting on the bosom of the Lakes, and fed by the streams of life and business which flow into them, the new-born MICHIGAN, and WISCONSIN, a giant yet in embryo. All this astonishing and almost magical result of freedom Kentucky has been compelled to witness, as she has looked abroad in the direction of the Free States ; while, turning backward to Virginia and Tennessee, she has seen the contrast which they exhibit, and has at the same time felt it to her heart's core, in the humiliating consciousness of her own condition.

Still, warned and rebuked as she has been by her observation and experience, suffering incessantly the ill effects of her mistaken policy, Kentucky has all the while been unwilling and has seemed to be unable to relieve herself. Her unwillingness and her inability are alike explained by the progressive increase of slavery, which has thus far proved

even more than a counterpoise to all the influences of freedom. There has been, indeed, from time to time, a slight occasional struggle between the conflicting elements in her political condition ; and recently it has appeared as if the contest of 1797 might be renewed, and as if it were reserved for another youthful CLAY to vindicate the honor of the name in the same cause with which the name had been at first so honorably associated. But mark the spirit and power of slavery, — how little it can now bear, and the violence of its retaliation. A free press was established at Lexington, with a Kentucky editor, Kentucky patrons, and exclusively devoted to the most important means of promoting the welfare of Kentucky. With a directness and boldness truly Kentuckian, the question of slavery was argued upon its merits, and all the evils and dangers of the system were distinctly and unsparingly exposed. It was soon evident that there were eyes to read, minds to think, and hearts to feel ; and that they could not long read, and think, and feel in vain. Instantly the slave-holders were alarmed, became indignant, and “muttered revenge.” While the noble-hearted editor was prostrated on a bed of sickness, unable to defend his property, though ready with his dying breath to avow his principles and to seal them with his blood, a mob in numbers and in purpose, — the leaders of both parties vying with each other for the honor of conducting it, — assembled in open day, declared the danger of a free press, and, in all the power and dignity of unresisted lawlessness, determined forcibly to remove it. There being no resistance, they succeeded in doing so ; the hazard and glory of the daring exploit having been generously shared by sixty “Kentucky gentlemen,” whose names will be emblazoned in the annals of her chivalry.

I know there are those who seem not to understand fully what this case means, and who indulge no sympathy with the heroic martyr. In common with the great mass of the non-slave-holding citizens of Kentucky, they could look coldly on, and, with indifference or secret satisfaction, await the result and see it accomplished. It is this effect on themselves and the many like them which opens to my view the most abhorrent feature of the transaction. The power of the mob was in the state of public sentiment ; and it was the pretended dignity of their proceedings, sustained, as they seem to have been, by the manifest approval or the silent sanction of the most respectable citizens, and justified in the end by the direct connivance of the judicial authori-

ties, that seems to me to make the duty most imperative to speak of all concerned as their conduct, rather than their reputation, deserves. The mob was sufficiently disgraceful ; the " sixty Kentucky gentlemen " achieved a title to infamy, which, if they can die and not be forgotten, will not be coveted by their posterity ; but still more disgraceful was the mockery of a trial by which the mob was acquitted, and preëminent in infamy, as history should exhibit them, were the court and jury, who, with the law in their hands, and under oath to administer it, could suffer such a crime to escape unpunished. I say there are those who seem not fully to understand what this case means ; and I therefore dwell upon it to remark, that, when, at the close of a half-century, under the circumstances which I have described, in the midst of so much light reflected alike from the present and the past, with the subject of slavery so constantly in the minds of men and in the hearts of women, with so much to show it to be expedient for both to make the master and the slave free, — when, in this age of benevolence, and in this professedly republican and Christian country, the attempt of an individual to discuss the subject of slavery in the Slave State supposed to be the most prepared for freedom can result only in such unrestrained violence of a " respectable mob," and in such coöperation of a court and jury to overthrow the rights of the press, of person, and of property, the conclusion is at least a rash one, that slavery in Kentucky is on the point of dissolution.

I am not unmindful that CASSIUS M. CLAY still lives, — that his press is reëstablished, — and that, beyond the reach of the mob, and beyond the jurisdiction of the court, he still speaks to Kentucky through his press, and will be heard. May God spare his life, and spare his press, and give him an increasing measure of the wisdom and firmness which his position demands ! I can appreciate his efforts, and believe that it will be his lot to derive precious encouragement and an exalted fame from the first fruits of his labors ; but I adopt his conviction, when I declare it as my own, that none other than political, moral, and religious means, and these only after a long, and arduous, and dangerous struggle, will effect the overthrow of slavery in Kentucky.

In treating thus fully the condition of slavery in Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky, it may be supposed that I have not sufficiently met the point of the argument which it becomes me to answer. It is argued, that, because these States are and can only be grain-growing States, it will not long

be possible for them to rely on slave labor, when grain can be grown by free labor with so much greater advantage. Grain, we are told, may now be grown even in the Northern Free States, and transported by railroad and canal to the remotest markets which have been supplied by the Slave States, and sold there, when the price has not been kept up by a foreign demand, at so low a rate as to make its continued production in the Slave States wholly unprofitable, and even sometimes ruinous. It seems probable just now that the scarcity of bread-stuffs abroad, with the rapidly increasing consumption in this country, may cause the demand to be equal to the supply from all the States for some time to come, and may keep up the price sufficiently to remunerate the planter in the Slave States ; and it is to be remembered that in the States in question, in addition to grain, the growing of tobacco, a precarious, I admit, and not usually a profitable crop, and the raising of stock, not wholly unsuited to their slave-holding condition, will be available resources. Even if these fail from the competition of free labor, the raising of negroes, of which a monopoly must be allowed to them, will continue to be suggested alike by the necessities and the degradation of their condition, and by the relation they will sustain to the growing slave-market of the cotton-planting States. But, after all, let the case be made out never so strongly against the economy and expediency of slavery, — let the sacrifice of interest be what it may, — let the profits of grain-growing wither from its grasp, — let the land become valueless, because with slave labor no crop can be grown upon it, — let the slave-holder be thus compelled to see himself impoverished, as well as to feel himself degraded, I agree with Cassius M. Clay, and for the reasons I have given, that it will be the last effect of economical considerations to extort from him his consent to abandon slavery.

“Leave it to itself, — let it alone, and slavery will die out ; and the annexation of Texas will only accelerate the result” ; — so say the anti-abstractionists and the Free State Democrats, and all others who seek to excuse their indifference and inaction at the present moment.

Do they reason from the past ? This is not a new policy which is about to be tried. It is now the seventieth year of the independence of the United States ; — and we may learn wisdom from experience. The Declaration of Independence, it may be remembered, proclaimed the doctrine of human freedom and equality as the basis of our political creed. The preamble to the Constitution of the United States

avowed it to be an object of that great compact "to secure the blessings of liberty." We commenced our political existence by calling ourselves republicans. At the formation of the Constitution, slavery, as a relic of the colonial system of Great Britain, was slightly infused into the existing organization ; the foreign slave-trade was a legal traffic in Georgia and South Carolina, and there were more than half a million of slaves in all the States. Experience had then proved the evils of slavery ; except in the two States just named, it was discountenanced by public sentiment ; and the conviction prevailed, that its abolition must be a natural and necessary result of the change of government. But the slave-holders were not prepared at once to carry into effect the Declaration of Independence, to justify the preamble to the Constitution, and to prove themselves republicans ; and, rather than to offend them by contending for an abstraction, there were enough in the Free States, then as now, who chose to leave slavery to die of itself, rather than to attempt to strike the blow by which it might be destroyed. Upon this pretext, an easy consent was given to the "compromises of the Constitution," including the right to import slaves for twenty years. "Let it alone so long, and slavery will die out," was the lullaby of the anti-abstractionists of that day. "Although slavery is not smitten with an apoplexy," said Mr. Dawes in the Massachusetts Convention, "it has received a mortal wound, and will die of a consumption." The experiment was then and thus first tried ; and it soon appeared that the case of the patient was entirely misunderstood ; that no mortal wound had been given, but that, on the contrary, resuscitated, nourished, and protected by the Constitution, slavery had obtained a lease of life that might only expire with it. It was seen, too, that the provision for importing slaves into Georgia and South Carolina, *which were the Texas of that day*, had secured to slavery its principal stronghold, — had then given, what has been so well described as again needed, "a Gibraltar to the South" ; and that it would have been far better that those States had not been annexed to the Union, rather than that the country should have suffered such lasting injury and irretrievable disgrace from the concessions which they extorted as the condition of annexation.

The fact to which I have just adverted is so important, that I desire to ask your attention still more particularly to it. Before the formation of the Constitution, the foreign slave-trade had been expressly prohibited by all the States except

Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, and the latter had virtually prohibited it by a capitation tax. It had been the prevailing expectation that it would be permanently prohibited by the new Constitution ; but the two former of the States mentioned had come into the Convention with the determination to resist any provision for this purpose, and declared through their delegates that they would refuse to confederate, unless "their right to import slaves should remain untouched." Through their influence upon the committee who prepared the first draft of the Constitution, a clause was inserted denying to the federal government the power to prohibit the importation of slaves.

This clause was opposed with great earnestness, and the discussion upon it, as preserved by Mr. Madison, and as sketched also by Luther Martin, shows us clearly how slavery was regarded at that period, and how, as much then as since, it became, in the words of Gouverneur Morris, the subject of "a bargain among the Northern and Southern States." It was resisted for the reason so strongly stated by Mr. Martin, of Maryland, that it would be "inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution, and dishonorable to the American character, to have such a feature in the Constitution." It was also opposed by Colonel Mason of Virginia in a spirit most honorable to him,—in kindling language which showed how warm his heart was on the subject, — on the ground, that it was "essential, in every point of view, that the general government should have power to prevent the increase of slavery." Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the character and influence of Virginia and Maryland, as they were exhibited at that period, and as they may be witnessed now in connection with slavery, — unless it be the want of contrast, the perfect identity, between the spirit and action of Georgia and South Carolina then and now. "Religion and humanity," said Mr. Rutledge, scornfully, "have nothing to do with the question. Interest alone is the governing principle with nations. The true question is, whether the Southern States shall or shall not be parties to the union." "South Carolina and Georgia," said General Pinckney, "cannot do without slaves." "Georgia," said Mr. Baldwin, "is decided on this point." Could the question have been determined strictly on its merits, could no collateral influence have been brought to bear on the delegates from the North, had there not been an opportunity for "a bargain," the great issue between liberty and slavery might have been at once and for ever settled ; but, as the circum-

stances presented themselves, "a compromise" was all that could be effected, and — I blush to say it — Massachusetts, for a reason which must be explained in another connection, became the foremost and the most anxious to secure this compromise. The compromise provided that the federal government should not exercise the power to prohibit the slave-trade for a period of twenty years, and was adopted upon the motion of General Pinckney, of South Carolina, seconded by Mr. Gorham, of Massachusetts. Who can fail to be struck with the remark of Mr. Madison, before it was adopted? "Twenty years," said he, "will produce all the mischief that can be apprehended from the liberty to import slaves. So long a term will be more dishonorable to the American character than to say nothing about it in the Constitution." With such a warning from such a source, the compromise was adopted, — Massachusetts, with all New England, and all the South, except Virginia, voting for it; and Virginia, — thus performing her most glorious act by the hands of her worthiest sons, — with New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, opposing it. I think you will now agree that I do not mistake the nature or exaggerate the influence of the act, when I refer to it as the first attempt for annexation, coupled with the extension of slavery.

Under the Constitution, then, slavery began to exhibit a thrifty growth, — doubling its numbers in little more than twenty years, — dying out nowhere, except, where its existence was scarcely nominal, in a few of the Northern States, — and living like a vampire, by imperceptibly extracting the life-blood from the domestic and social, as well as the political, institutions of the Southern States. It was seen and felt to be an evil; it had then proved in many instances a burden of expense; the testimony of enlightened statesmen and patriots was recorded against it; conscientious individuals gave occasional proof of their ceasing to be responsible for it; and Washington died, crowning the glory of his life by proving, in his last will and testament, that he could not die a slave-holder. Could it have been restricted to its original resources, and kept confined within the narrow limits which it occupied at the formation of the Constitution, the various influences opposed to slavery might have produced some visible effect in diminishing it; but reinforced by foreign supplies throughout the ill-fated twenty years, and stimulated without doubt by the culture of cotton in the Southern States, which had at that period but just been commenced, it was only seen to increase constantly and rapidly. This

period, too, had scarcely terminated, when the second annexation, effected by the negotiation with France for the purchase of Louisiana, extended its limits and gave it still another resource in the growth and manufacture of sugar. With not quite so long an interval, the purchase of Florida constituted the third annexation, securing so much additional territory to the dominion of Slavery.

The effect of these past annexations upon slavery is not a matter of speculation ; the facts are before us. By the first, the door was closed against the hope of its early abolition ; by the second, not only its extension, but the increase of its political power, and all the consequences involved in the Missouri compromise, were rendered inevitable ; of the third, the disgrace and the cost of the Florida war were the first fruits, while the admission of one divisible into two new Slave States is the forthcoming consequence. The results, exhibited, as some like to calculate them, in figures, show an extent of almost a million of square miles, equal to about six hundred millions of acres, of slave-holding territory brought within the Union by virtue of the first three annexations, to which Texas will add more than one third as much more, — all which, together with the territory included in the old Slave-holding States, will make the aggregate amount of more than 1,500,000 square miles, equal to one thousand millions of acres, of slave-holding territory within the United States, including Texas. They also show the present slave population in the country to be three millions, distributed already throughout one half of the States of the Union, and thereby giving to the Slave States, according to the rule of the Constitution, as tested in the last national election, a proportion of political power in the House of Representatives and in the Electoral Colleges sufficient for the choice of one member by less than six thousand votes, while the Free States are hardly entitled to one member for upwards of ten thousand votes.

By such facts — and I might proceed much further with interesting and instructive statistical details — it is seen at a glance, that the annexation of slave-holding territory has not as yet proved the means of furnishing a burial-ground for slavery ; and they who will reflect will be enabled to satisfy themselves, from the proofs before us, that the policy of annexation has interposed from time to time an effectual obstacle to the means in progress for the diminution of slavery, and has been in fact the one thing needful to its steady and permanent increase. It is easy, I think, to show, that, slow

and difficult as must be that process, the only way to abolish slavery in a State is to confine it there ; to compel its citizens to submit to the necessity of its natural increase beyond their ability to sustain it ; to deprive them of the privilege of getting rid of the refractory and mutinous, and of the mischief of their example, by selling and sending them abroad ; to afford no opportunity to the enterprising planter to remove his slaves to a more fertile region, when his paternal acres have been exhausted ; and to cut off the last resource from those who remain at home, of breeding slaves to supply a foreign demand. I cannot allow myself the time to dwell upon this topic ; but the hints I have given will, I trust, enable you to attain some very obvious and important practical conclusions ; and when you have done so, I shall desire you to consider whether you can deem it wise or safe to anticipate in the future from the same causes any other effect than what you now see they have produced in the past. As it is, with the light that must have pierced the blindness of all but those who will not see, how can you fail to perceive, that, in the project for the annexation of Texas, there are singularly combined, as if culled for the purpose, all the worst peculiarities of all the preceding annexations ? Does not the parallel commence by its being regarded in the same light with the first annexation of Georgia and South Carolina, as determining the question whether at this moment slavery is to be arrested and the Slave States are to be thus notified of the decision of the country as well as of the age against them, or whether, by the decision of the country against the age, it is to be sustained, extended, and, if possible by human means, perpetuated ? In the provisions of the joint resolution, and in the formal legislation by which they are to be carried into effect, do you not discern the obnoxious design, all the evils and all the dangers, differing only so far as they are indefinitely magnified, of the Missouri compromise ? And furthermore, shocked as you have been by the atrocities of the Florida war, — estimating, as you are but just able to begin to do, its enormous cost, — do you not see, that, with the annexation of Texas, there may commence, and in all human probability there must commence, a series of wars alike with civilized and savage foes, which, in carnage and devastation, and in the expenditure as well of treasure as of blood, and in all disastrous and disgraceful consequences, will so far exceed the Florida war, as to cause it scarcely to be remembered ?

Let me once more employ the aid of figures. Consider Texas as embracing within its last claimed limits a territory

of nearly 400,000 square miles, equal to 250,000,000 acres. Endeavour to realize its extent by reflecting that it is capable of containing fifty States of the size of Massachusetts, that it is more than twice as large as all New England and all the Middle States taken collectively, and that it is equal to more than one third of the whole territory included within the States already admitted into the Union. Consider, that, in a few years, taking the present Slave cotton and sugar States as a standard, it will be capable of employing and subsisting a slave population of at least two millions. Consider what a market for slaves must be opened to furnish the supply which will thus be needed, and to what extent and for how long a period the business of rearing slaves in the old States may be continued and made profitable. Consider, that, with the slave population which I have supposed, the States into which Texas may be divided will be entitled to elect, according to the present apportionment, more than fifty members of the House of Representatives, two Senators for each State, and as many Presidential Electors as will be equal to the joint number of Senators and Representatives. Weigh carefully in your minds all these results, — which must be verified, if the future shall be like the past, if the Ethiopian shall not change his skin nor slavery its character, — and tell me, in the exercise of your sober judgment, what will be the effect of the annexation of Texas, — where we shall find ourselves, if the Union shall be preserved, a few years hence, — and what will be the condition and character of the Free States, if slavery shall be enabled to exert all its pernicious political and moral influences over them upon so enlarged a scale. Consider, further, that the necessary policy of slavery is one of continued annexation. See the manifest unwillingness to be content, even for a time, with the acquisition of Texas. Contemplate the project already formed, already in progress, for the annexation of California ; and see how it may be followed, even at no distant day, by a scheme of bribery or violence that will bring within the Union the whole remaining portion of the Mexican Republic. See, too, the evidence that the slave-holding politicians, not satisfied even with the vast extent of territory which they may desire and seize upon the continent, are about to extend their grasp to Cuba, and even have a design upon St. Domingo. With the policy they avow, with the motives which manifestly actuate them, ask yourselves, I pray you, where they will stop, so long as the Free States shall go with them and for them, and the lust of power and the cravings of interest shall

still beckon them onward. If you consider the projects which I have intimated utopian and chimerical, tell me if there is one of them which has not been seriously proposed and urged, and whether either of them or all together are a whit more improbable than the present increase of slavery would have been deemed when the Constitution was framed, or than the annexation of Texas was regarded not many years, and not very many months, ago.

With this rapid and imperfect sketch of the successive results of the annexation of Texas, if it can be effected, and if the policy in which it originated can be successfully carried on, I wish to combine a view of the opposite results which might be confidently anticipated, if the iniquitous scheme could now be defeated. If it were defeated, the advantages of a victory would inure to the Free States, since it must have been won by their spirited and united exertions, and it would prove a triumph of their principles. In such an event, they would for the first time feel their own strength, and their formidable and so long unconquerable adversary would feel it also ; and from that time forward, both would act upon the conviction that the political power of the country had changed hands, that the future course of slavery must be retrograde, and that its abolition was inevitable. A policy worthy of free states, intrusted for its execution to the worthy representatives of free states, would at once pervade the action of the national government ; the Constitution would in time be purged of its pernicious compromises ; the blessed influence of a practical regard to equal rights would be witnessed in the entire system of legislation ; our citizens would have it in their power, and would find themselves induced by their interests and by all higher motives, to become republicans ; they would be content to improve, until they could exhaust them, the almost boundless and endless resources of their present territory ; and would furnish to the world an unparalleled, and as yet unimagined, example of what three hundred millions of freemen may become and do, when intelligence and skill and industry, under the guidance and control of Christian morality, shall exert their full and lasting influence upon the human condition.

I proceed to a view of the subject, which I have reserved as the last in order, because in its nature it is distinct from all the others, and because in my own judgment it is comparatively the least entitled to consideration. I see, however, from the evidence around me, that others regard it in a different light and ascribe to it much practical importance. To

expose what seem to me their erroneous conceptions in several respects, I shall freely discuss it, in the manner which befits my relation to those whom I shall be understood particularly to address. I allude to what may be denominated the commercial view of the subject, proceeding upon the supposition that the annexation of Texas will result in many advantages to our merchants, ship-owners, and manufacturers.

I must say again, that, in my judgment, this aspect of the case is far less worthy of consideration than any other, and I am free to confess that there are reminiscences and associations connected with it which make it repulsive to me. It reminds me at once, and it requires me also to remind you, of what I omitted to state in my former reference to the unfortunate compromise incorporated into the Constitution for the continuance of the foreign slave-trade. I merely stated that the compromise was the result of a bargain between the North and South ; but what the North gained by the bargain, and sought to bargain for, I forbore to mention. I have therefore now to present a commercial view of that measure. When the question upon the slave-trade first arose in the Convention, Massachusetts and the other Northern States were disposed to coöperate with Virginia in prohibiting it by the Constitution ; and at first the secession threats of Georgia and South Carolina were unheeded by them. But presently, as soon as the Convention proceeded to consider and act upon that section in the reported draft of the Constitution which requires "the assent of two thirds of the members present in each house" to pass a navigation act, it appeared that the Southern States had it in their power to retaliate upon the Northern, by insisting upon this provision, which might virtually deprive the North of all the anticipated benefit of such acts. The interest of navigation the South saw to be exclusively a Northern interest, and they seemed to regard it as no object for them to secure to their Northern neighbours an advantage over the European ship-owners, who otherwise might transport their products and furnish their necessary supplies. They had also many vague and indefinite apprehensions of the danger that might result from making it practicable for a bare majority, without their concurrence, to pass navigation acts ; and it appeared, that, if they adhered to their purpose, they might carry votes enough with them to retain this restraining clause in the Constitution. The North, seeing their chief *interest* to be thus in jeopardy, became alarmed, and cast about for the means of warding off the impending injury. I blush now to add the remark, that

the two parties soon proved that they understood each other, and were ready enough to accommodate their differences upon the ground of a reciprocity of interests. Give us up the slave-trade, said the South, and we will relinquish the restraint upon navigation acts. It is a bargain, said the North ; we will relinquish our principles against slavery, if we can secure our interests in navigation. " I desire it to be remembered," said a member from Massachusetts, " the Eastern States have no motive to union but a *commercial one*." " If the Northern States consult their interest," said a member from South Carolina, " they will not oppose the increase of slaves, which will increase the commodities of which they will become the carriers." In this mode, by these means, under the influence of such considerations, the compromise was effected. Both the subjects in dispute were referred to a committee, and Luther Martin, who was a member, says, — " I found the Eastern States, notwithstanding their *aversion to slavery*, were very willing to indulge the Southern States at least with a temporary liberty to prosecute the *slave-trade*, provided the Southern States would in their turn gratify them by laying no restriction on navigation acts ; and after a very little time, the committee, by a great majority, agreed upon a report, by which the general government was to be prohibited from preventing the importation of slaves for a limited time, and the restrictive clause relative to navigation acts was to be omitted." A few days afterwards we find General Pinckney, of South Carolina, commending " the liberal conduct of the Eastern States towards the views of South Carolina," which Mr. Madison explains as referring to the recent compromise.

I state this case thus minutely that all may be satisfied I have not misstated it. I state all the circumstances, as necessary to a complete explanation of a most important, and altogether the most unfortunate, act of the Convention which formed the Constitution. I refer to it, reluctantly and yet frankly, as an indelible blot upon the character of Massachusetts, and as an emphatic warning to all the advocates of her commercial interests to beware of committing themselves to any view of slavery which involves a postponement of principle to interest, and with this the sacrifice of her permanent welfare, for the attainment of a slight, temporary, and even questionable advantage.

But is the annexation of Texas of any commercial importance to the United States ? Let me say, in the first place, that we do not need Texas merely for the purpose of making

an addition to our present country. On the contrary, the country, as it is, is large enough, and altogether too large, for all our imaginable commercial wants and uses, for ages to come. Our population must increase twenty and perhaps a hundred fold, our wealth must exceed that of Europe, — the accumulation of centuries, — before we shall begin to have more labor and capital than can be profitably employed upon our present territory. We do not need an enlargement in any direction to diversify our soil and climate, to increase our agricultural, mineral, or marine productions, to add to the extent of our seacoast, to give us greater facilities of coast-wise or inland transportation, to complete the routes of our railroads, to supply feeders for our canals, or waterfalls for our manufactories. Within our present limits we possess in abundance and variety all the resources which can stimulate or reward the utmost possible increase and diffusion of intelligence, skill, enterprise, and industry. For commercial purposes, too, the world has had experience enough to teach us that it is within a small and populous region, rather than where a sparse population is scattered over a wilderness, — that it is where industry and wealth can be concentrated, where labor can be most advantageously subdivided, where merchants and manufacturers may congregate, that commerce will be the most sure to flourish. Could our country be diminished, rather than enlarged, in size, — could that large portion of our inhabitants who are all the while moving towards the frontiers, passing their lives, for all commercial purposes, most unprofitably, remain fixed, and be steadily employed in the pursuits of productive industry, — could our population be kept more together, become more assimilated in character, be brought more directly under common influences adapted to their intellectual and moral wants, — who can fail to see that important commercial as well as other still more valuable advantages might be secured, and that, in fact, the extension of territory beyond a corresponding increase of population and wealth is one of the most fatal errors in political economy?

In the next place, if we must have more territory within our limits, what we least need, what we should least desire, for commercial purposes, is slave-holding territory. What we already have of slavery has proved only a constant drawback, a vexatious hindrance, to our commercial progress. Our mercantile dealings with the Slave States have been a succession of practical lessons upon the commercial disadvantages of slavery. Commerce delights in freedom, and can flourish only under the auspices of freedom. The mer-

chant who personifies the true idea of his profession should be one who with his own hands has built up his fortune, who has therefore all the intelligence, enterprise, perseverance, and economy, and withal the strict integrity, which none but one who is brought up under free institutions is likely to possess ; and such a merchant, for the satisfactory, and, in the long run, for the most profitable, transaction of business, will desire to deal with others like himself. It is a mistake to suppose that we reckon among our best customers those who are so ignorant or necessitous that we may easily take advantage of them, those who are so reckless and thoughtless that we can never trust them from want of confidence in their character and honesty, or those who have so few mercantile ideas, and are so little accustomed to mercantile usages, that all our trade with them must be reduced to a simple barter. Take the case of the slave-holders, as we know them commercially. Except so far as they avail of the services of agents, how true is it that for the most part they seem to be incapable of transacting business in its most simple forms, that they have an utter distaste and aversion to it, that they loathe punctuality and promptness, and can never habituate themselves to a regular method in their transactions, and that, from various causes, there is a constant risk in extensive dealings with them ! How true is it that nearly the whole of the business which can be carried on in the Slave-holding States is now transacted by foreign agents ; that even the overseer of the plantation is hired from abroad, — too often a Yankee, — that the merchant who furnishes the supplies and sells the crop is a Yankee or a Scotchman, — and that, between the overseer and the merchant, the planter remains without employment, suffering all the evils of an unconcerned dependence upon agents, without occasion to exercise sagacity, to acquire habits of diligence and economy, and with his affairs in such a train, that in ordinary times he will be likely to become impoverished ! How true is it, that, as often as we have tried the experiment of extending our credits freely in the Slave-holding States, the first commercial revolution, a bank explosion or a fall in cotton, has produced a most meagre exhibit of assets in the hands of our debtors !

Looking at the state of things more generally, do we not see, at a glance, that nowhere in so limited an extent as in a slave-holding community do we find the elements of commercial enterprise and prosperity ? An immense proportion of the population are slaves, whose labor is scarcely suffi-

cient to supply the wants of their masters, and who are doomed to subsist upon the slightest possible allowance of food and clothing. How much commerce can grow out of the supply of the wants of slaves? A little salted meat, pork, and fish, of the lowest quality and value, — a few coarse cottons and woollens, — some rough-hide shoes, — and hide-cuttings enough to make whips for them, comprise very nearly the variety of purchases which are made for the slaves. How is it possible for a population, through the supply of their wants, and I will add through the productiveness of their labor, to do less for commerce than is done by a slave population? And then, as to the wants of their masters, considering how few the masters are, in proportion to the slaves, — with all their reckless prodigality and indiscriminating luxury, how comparatively little, much as it often exceeds what they pay for, is their aggregate consumption! How little beyond the mere supply of personal wants does their condition call for or admit of! But little need be or is expended upon their buildings; the cultivation of their plantations requires but few implements and vehicles; and beyond sending away their crops and bringing back their scanty supplies, they have no disposition and no ability to engage in any business. There can be no greater mistake than to consider it for our benefit that they cannot manufacture for themselves, and that they must rely on us in a great measure to feed and clothe them, and to furnish the necessaries, conveniences, and comforts which they pay for out of their crops. Abolish slavery, give them free labor, make them free laborers themselves, let them do enough for themselves to enable all the people to supply all their wants, and beyond supplying them to accumulate a surplus capital, — let education diffuse knowledge, — let labor be divided and subdivided, until all mechanical and manufacturing employments suited to their circumstances shall be introduced amongst them, — let public improvements be successfully prosecuted, — let them thus become intelligent and virtuous, and industrious and wealthy, and depend upon it we shall not have a diminished or less profitable commerce with them, — they will only be larger and safer, and in all respects better, customers than we have ever found them, — we shall still be Yankees enough to produce or manufacture or import what, with their rapid increase of wants, they will still need, and they, as well as we, shall realize, that, without Texas, the present country — only let it be a free country — may become all that commerce or patriotism can desire. To abolish slavery

within the country, therefore, rather than to extend the country for the sake of increasing slavery, is the true dictate of a commercial policy.

I have still to notice another suggestion, too frequently uttered to do credit to our general sagacity, and only serving to expose an influence which all must regret to be obliged to regard as operative in this case. In vague terms, it is intimated that Texas will be a vast cotton region, that the Free States are to be filled with cotton manufactories, and that it will be a master stroke of policy to obtain for our future use a monopoly of all the cotton which the continent can produce. There are also some who have deluded themselves by a syllogism, and who boldly go so much further as to say, that, as the cotton manufacture is, or is fast becoming, our principal interest, and as slavery has produced cotton, and is necessary to produce it, it is essential to the cotton manufacture, and therefore all-important to us, to secure all the cotton land we can, and also to secure and retain slavery with it. If this indeed were so, how difficult should we find it to discover any mode of escape from the all-absorbing vortex of iniquitous and accursed prosperity to which we should be hurrying! How easy would it be to read the seeming design of Providence in ripening the harvest of which we had sown the seed in our first political sacrifice of moral principle, — in our first consent to sustain slavery!

I have already reminded you that the fatal permission to Georgia and South Carolina, to import slaves for twenty years, was given principally through the agency of Massachusetts, just at the period when the culture of cotton had taken its first start, and when this importation of slaves seems to have been the necessary instrumentality by which it was to be extended. Very shortly afterwards, Massachusetts almost seems to have contributed her further agency in removing the only obstruction to the profitable employment of slaves in this culture by the invention of the saw-gin, through her citizen, Eli Whitney. With the slaves to cultivate it, and the saw-gin to clean it, the supply of cotton soon began to increase, and has continued to increase in a rapidly augmenting ratio, until, in contrast with the fact, that in 1784 an import of eight bags into Liverpool was seized by the custom-house on the ground that cotton was not the produce of the United States, the slave region is now furnishing an annual supply of upwards of two millions of much larger bags, the value of which at the present depressed prices falls not much short of seventy millions of dollars, — constituting the

raw material the manufacture of which has secured to Great Britain nearly all her wealth, commerce, and power, and which has begun to do as much, with a flattering prospect that it will do much more, for the country of its growth.

Now, if it were as true that cotton must be as that it has been cultivated by slaves, and that for all the profit derived from its culture and manufacture we must be primarily indebted to slavery alone, I should say, — as who, speaking in the fear of God and the love of man, would not say? — Perish prosperity, and abolish slavery, and let us be content and be resolved never to manufacture or wear cotton, if, while cotton grows, slavery must grow with it, and nothing but the sacrifice of our profits and comforts can check their growth. But it need not be so. In this heart-chilling reasoning, we have begun by yielding to a false assumption. The syllogism fails in its minor premise. The cotton manufacture is conducive to our prosperity, but slavery is not essential to the cotton manufacture. All that the slave contributes is human labor ; human labor, therefore, is all that is essential ; and if that can be contributed otherwise than by slaves, slavery is not indispensable ; if it can be otherwise contributed so that it will be more profitable, slavery is not expedient ; and consequently, if slavery has been an unnecessary and the least profitable mode of labor during the whole progress of the cotton culture, all the improvements and prosperity resulting therefrom have been retarded and diminished by our resort to slavery.

The only question, therefore, is, whether human labor cannot be obtained for the culture of cotton in some other mode than by making slaves of the men who perform it. The labor of slaves, as all know, is reluctant, compulsory, stinted ; a large gang of slaves, under the lash of the overseer, will not perform as much as a few free laborers, left to work by themselves. Why, then, are not free laborers employed in the cultivation of cotton ? This question has usually been answered by stating, as if all admitted it, that white men only can be free laborers, and that none but the negro can bear the climate of the cotton region. But the time has gone by to grant either of these postulates ; there are many free negroes, and the climate of a large portion of the cotton region is claimed and proved to be as healthy for the white man as the climate of any part of the country. One of the principal reasons for the annexation of Texas is, that, unless it is joined to the United States and made a slave-holding country by our unconstitutional legislation, it will be-

come a free cotton-growing country ; that, if the Constitution of the United States cannot pursue them as fugitives, our slaves will escape into it, and prove that they can become free laborers ; and that the free-labor cotton of Texas will then be supplied to the foreign market at a lower rate than the slave-labor cotton of the United States. If our slaveholders believed that Texas without slavery could not raise cotton, why did they not leave her to her fate, when, in 1829, the Mexican government abolished slavery ? Every one should understand the case sufficiently to bear in mind that it was the fact that Mexico had become a free country, and the belief that the cotton-plant would thrive in Texas under the cultivation of her free laborers, and that slavery could not long be sustained in their neighbourhood, that alarmed the slave-holders, and gave the first impulse to the project of annexation ; and every cotton manufacturer should now see and feel that in the success of the project the gain of the slave-holder is his loss ; that the application of free labor to the cotton culture, under such circumstances as to demonstrate that it is practicable and expedient, and, by reason of the competition, to make it unavoidable to introduce it into the Slave States, is a result which he should be especially solicitous to accomplish ; that therefore, on the score of interest alone, — not to urge it upon him on any ground of principle, — and looking only to one of its indirect consequences, he should be an opponent of the annexation of Texas.

I feel that I have proceeded far enough, though but a single step, in speaking of the connection between cotton and slavery. All that cotton requires for its cultivation and manufacture is human labor and skill, singularly diversified and beautifully combined. For this labor and skill, in every stage succeeding the growth and gathering of the crop, it is indebted to freedom ; the saw-gin, the throstle, the mule, and the power-loom are all the inventions and appliances of free genius and labor. The slave is required, the slave can be employed, only upon the plantation ; but let me say that the time has come when men of common sense are or should be convinced that the slave is not needed and should not be employed even there ; that his place may be better supplied by a freeman ; and that the master, if he consult his interest or his duty, need not look beyond his slave to obtain a freeman. Let me venture to say that the time has come when the free negro — even the fugitive from slavery who has the good fortune to remain in safety — is seen to

aspire to the improvement attainable by other human beings, and when he is beginning to prove himself capable of attaining it, — sufficiently so, at least, to convince us all, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that, with free hands and for fair wages, all who are slaves can and will labor for their masters, or for themselves, and thus indirectly for us, far more diligently, and with greater profit, than when shackled and scourged, and subject to all the disadvantages of their present condition.

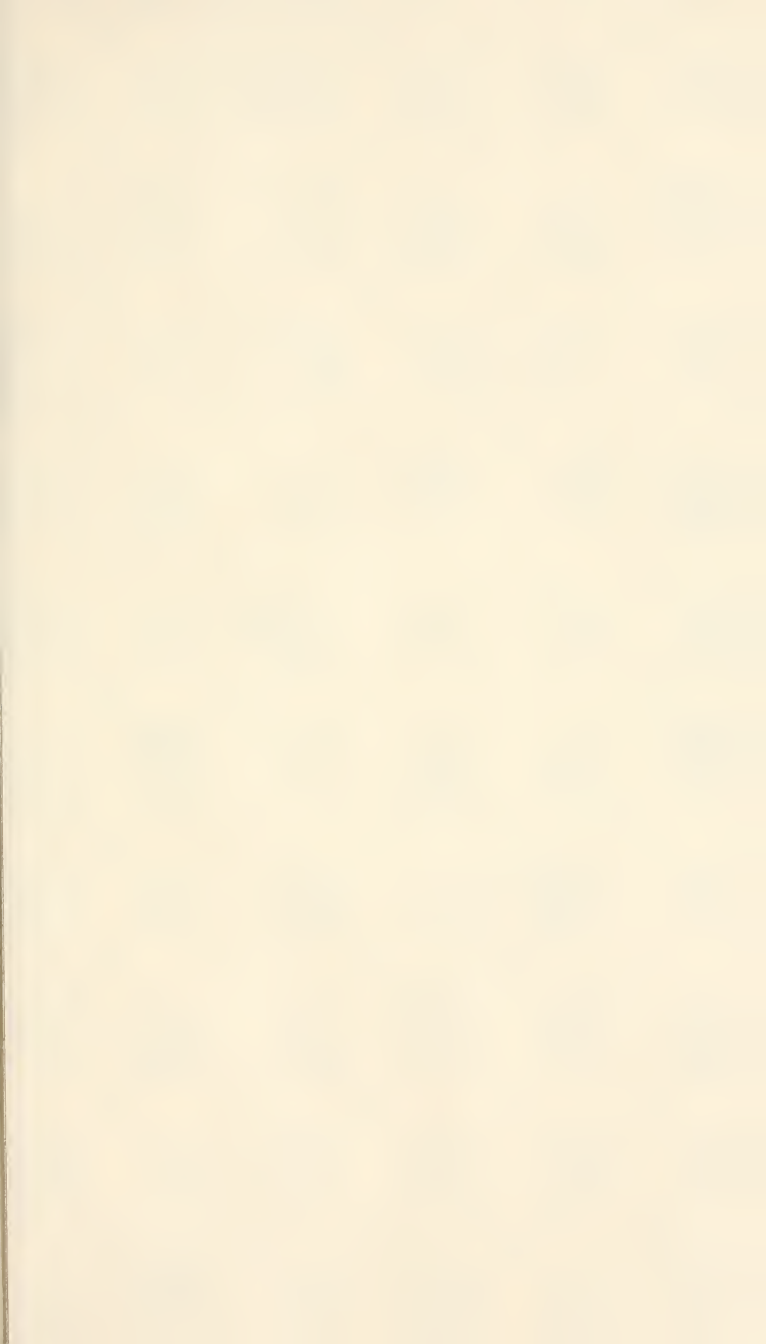
I will briefly present another view. Let Texas be annexed to the United States, — let the slave population amount to what I have previously estimated it to be, — let it be covered with cotton plantations, — you will at once see that such an immense growth will produce a surplus of product, far, far exceeding what is now, or soon or perhaps ever can be, wanted for the manufactories of the country. Already, without Texas, we can manufacture but a small proportion — scarcely a fifth — of our crop, and all the rest goes to Europe, principally to England. The export is so large, that, although through the agency of commerce it becomes exchanged for foreign productions, which are brought back and distributed through the country, and thus a great general benefit is derived from it, it has nevertheless had the effect to produce a peculiar commercial sympathy and sense of mutual obligation between the planters and those who are thus their principal customers across the Atlantic, and to lead the slave-holding politicians always to favor a tariff that should have a partial regard to the interests of these foreign buyers, and that should operate against, rather than in favor of, our own manufactures, and thus withhold the encouragement and facilities to domestic industry so much needed and prized by the people of the Free States. This is one of the cases in which a conflict of interests has produced discord between the two sections of the country ; and in this particular case all amongst us see and feel that whatever contributes to extend the cotton-exporting interest, to strengthen the bond of commercial alliance between the South and Great Britain, to lead them to undervalue their commercial relation to the North, to make our products and manufactures less needful to them, and to put them more in the way of obtaining their supplies from abroad, can hardly fail to prove injurious to our interests, and must come in aid of the many other causes which, like this, through the influence of slavery, will operate to divide rather than to keep the country together. If, while we have already cotton land enough, and

more than enough, for our manufactures and commerce for generations to come, Texas were not doomed, because of slavery, to become for the most part only a cotton-growing region, — if a body of enterprising free inhabitants could be encouraged to apply their intelligence and skill, as well as their more economical and effective labor, to the multiplication of the productions of her soil, the apprehended evil might be obviated, and a result of great general advantage might be secured. But, because of slavery, this may not be ; and the only result which is practicable is, to increase the exports of cotton, to strengthen the foreign interest and the foreign influence which proceed from this source, and to reinforce, until it shall become unconquerable, the political party which is pledged to an anti-tariff policy. Already, in advance of the annexation, we have decisive evidence of the design of its advocates to commence a new and formidable attack upon the existing tariff. The President, who was nominated and chosen to secure the annexation, is seen to be directing his second movement against the tariff. The Secretary of the Treasury, elevated to his post as the most undaunted and unscrupulous friend of annexation, is about to prove himself also the most unyielding enemy of a protective policy. The party leaders and the party presses are already arraying themselves in support of the administration upon both these issues ; and since it is demonstrable that the same power which shall bring Texas into the Union will be able and sure to reduce the tariff, our manufacturers, if they once more look towards Texas, may be able to discover in what quarter their danger lies. May others see that they discern at once their danger and their duty !

I have thus explained the views which I entertain in relation to the annexation of Texas, and the aspect of slavery in the United States in connection therewith ; and I have referred to what seem to me very manifest misconceptions of the nature and bearings of this great question. I have no time for recapitulation, nor is it necessary. It is enough if I have brought you to the conclusion, that opposition to the *extension* of slavery is a most imperative and solemn duty at the *present moment* ; and my whole purpose will have been accomplished, if I have also induced you to see and feel, that, in the event of the annexation of Texas, our political and moral welfare and safety will require that we should at once resolve, and deliberately prepare ourselves to act upon the resolution, to make every possible effort, and to exert all our influence in our various relations, — public and private,

political and religious, — to effect as speedily as may be the abolition of slavery in the country, or our deliverance from it.

I have ventured to dissent from the current opinion, that slavery may be expected and should be left to die of itself; and on the contrary I have exhibited the rapid growth and formidable power of slavery as a political institution, and have endeavoured to show how arduous, difficult, and dangerous may be the struggle in which it shall be overthrown. Still I do not despair of its overthrow; in the worst event, left to itself, when the measure of its iniquity shall be full, the fate of every corrupt political institution must await it. I do not despair of an agency that shall produce a more beneficent result. I have faith in God, in the prevalence of truth, and the omnipotence of love. I have faith in man; I feel the force of the indissoluble tie of human brotherhood; and I know that the cause of philanthropy, if a few are faithful to it, must advance, and that, in the end, it will bless all whom it can reach. I cannot, therefore, be one of those who neither make an effort, nor form an opinion, nor indulge a feeling, upon this subject. Least of all can I sympathize with such as regard the present state of public feeling as a temporary excitement, and affect to believe, that, with the consummation of the annexation, all will pass over and be forgotten. Pass over! The cloud of doubt, anxiety, and distrust will soon pass over, to reveal the sun and stars of the moral firmament, which illuminate and cheer the path of duty; but who can believe that what is not a shadow, but substance, not fleeting error, but solid and lasting truth, can be thus instantly dispersed? Good seed in good ground, — a righteous purpose in warm hearts, — under the smile of heaven, must it not spring and grow, and bring forth fruit? Pure love of suffering humanity, once kindled in the human bosom, can it be extinguished? Pass over and be forgotten! The past itself, fellow-citizens, must pass away from our remembrance, — all its records of glory and lessons of duty must be obliterated from our memory and expunged from history, before the present can exhibit so unworthy a relation to it. Do we forget who and where we are? Can we stand together here, so near our fathers' graves, and fail to be reminded that their principles were destined to be immortal? While FANEUIL HALL stands, must not MASSACHUSETTS stand, erect and firm *in support of LIBERTY, in opposition to SLAVERY*? While stands the STATE-HOUSE, must not MASSACHUSETTS stand, true to the spirit of the ANTI-TEXAS PLEDGE *which was taken and recorded there*?







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